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THE NEW REPUBLIC

April 25, 1981

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TRB

from Washington
April 25, 1981

Justices for All

Great social issues have a habit of slipping between the crevices of the separation of powers in America and ending up in the Supreme Court. There is a strong likelihood of this happening in the next four years. It isn't merely that President Reagan is sympathetic to half a dozen controversial proposals almost certain to be questioned on constitutional grounds if enacted—federal aid to private and parochial schools, school prayer, and bans on abortion and busing. There is also social tension in the air between conservatives and liberals that is likely to produce litigation in a period of rapid transition. It is a time of change, of anxiety, even of violence. Chief Justice Warren Burger told the American Bar Association recently, "Crime and the fear of crime have permeated the fabric of American life." Sooner or later that brings cases to the Supreme Court. What kind of a court is it?

It is an unusual court. It hasn't had a new member in five years. Like the Soviets' Politburo it is a gerontocracy. The nine members average just under 68 years. Five are septuagenarians. Only two of the nine were named by Democratic presidents: Thurgood Marshall by Lyndon Johnson and Byron White by Kennedy. Nixon named four: the Chief Justice and Blackmun, Powell, and Rehnquist. Eisenhower picked two: Brennan and Potter Stewart; and Ford picked Stevens. Normally a president names a few Justices in a four-year term, but no vacancy occurred during Carter's presidency. Longevity and the law of averages now indicate that Reagan will have several appointments to make. They would come at a critical time, when a number of key decisions hang on close votes and could easily be diluted or reversed.

When Warren Burger succeeded Earl Warren 12 years ago, many thought a period of liberalism would be followed by a period of dark reaction. This seemed particularly true as Nixon made appointment after appointment (with the Senate rejecting two of them). It hasn't happened quite that way. Nixon got one strong conservative in Rehnquist, the youngest member (age 56), but the other three have not turned out to be what Nixon promised: "strict constructionists." No president knows just what he is getting when he makes an appointment. The Burger Court, for example, allowed publication of the Pentagon Papers, overturned state laws forbidding abortion, ordered Nixon to hand over his tapes, and in the *Bakke* case upheld the right of universities to take "affirmative action" in weighing the race of applicants in admission decisions.

But more and more the Court seems to vacillate on controversial precedents it has laid down. The abortion case, for example, was modified in a later five-to-four decision declaring that Congress may refuse to finance most abortions under the so-called Hyde Amendment to Medicaid, even if a doctor holds it "medically necessary." Now Representative Henry J. Hyde, Republican of Illinois, proposes a constitutional amendment to ban abortions, a proposal Reagan supported as candidate. Columnist Jack Anderson angrily charged the Burger Court with "systematically working to repeal the United States Constitution" when it restricted the right of public and press to attend criminal trials (*Gannett v. DePasqualle*). Subsequently the Court modified its earlier ruling in a new opinion (*Richmond Newspapers v. Virginia*). This was handed down seven to one, which seemed decisive enough. But the seven Justices in the majority produced six separate opinions. Rehnquist dissented altogether and Powell did not participate.

President Reagan could effect some profound changes by appointing judges of commanding personality. Professor John Peter Giraudo of the University of California declares flatly, "Most social reforms in the United States since the Second World War have been initiated by the judiciary." Reagan appointments to the Court could determine the legal precedent on a number of critical social issues for a generation. This is one reason some voters preferred Carter to Reagan in the recent election.

Meanwhile there is the lingering question of violent crime in America. The matter deeply concerns Chief Justice Burger. He thinks criminal procedure is in disarray. He does not deny that poverty stimulates crime but he does not see why this should stand in the way of quicker and surer justice. Others find different reasons for rising rates of violent crime—the presence of 50 million handguns at large in America, for example. "Ronald Reagan is the most progun president in my lifetime," exulted John Snyder, chief lobbyist for the progun Citizens Committee for the Right to Keep and Bear Arms. As governor, Reagan gave his wife a small revolver for self-protection. Has he modified his views since the assassination attempt? His outspoken daughter certainly takes another view. She vehemently denounced handguns after the attack.

FBI director William Webster, a former Missouri federal judge, says that crimes of violence, according to agency statistics, increased 13 percent last year. He quietly told reporters the other day that New York police have 200 cases of gold necklaces being snatched from women's throats. Some women reportedly have given up wearing jewelry when they go into crowded places. Webster also said that in some areas mothers now give their children pocket money so that if they are threatened they can give up the coins in the hope of avoiding violence. The children are taught to pay ransom at an early age.

There are leaders like Webster and Burger who feel these things deeply, who feel that America's way of life is threatened. There is an emotional reaction when Reagan is attacked, when Congress yields to the gun lobby, when a new victim is reported from Atlanta, when the official figure on crimes of violence rises another notch. But does it last? "Like it or not," Warren Burger told the American Bar Association, "today we are approaching the status of an impotent society, whose capability of maintaining elementary security in the streets, in schools, and for the homes of the people is in doubt."

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Correspondence

Nuclear war worries

To the editors:

I am upset by Michael Kinsley's opposition to the growing medical professional movement for the Prevention of Nuclear War ("The Doctors' Plot," *TNR*, April 11). God knows our nuclearized planet can use all the opposition that is possible, and then some, in the hope of bringing world leaders to their collective senses. But this is not my real point, which is that Kinsley does not comprehend the difference between "realizing" the awesome results of nuclear war and truly *feeling* them—that is, absorbing the horror and "gore" that would describe many hundreds of millions of human lives.

The doctors hold no delusions of grandeur—"Believe me, I'm a doctor"—but instead rightly feel that if only those in crucial positions could be kept still long enough to view a vivid documentary of the Hiroshima tragedy, or read a few "hair-raising accounts of deaths by the millions, colossal fires, widespread famine, generations of genetic mutants, not to mention grave psychological trauma," then perhaps they could be budged from their patently asinine policies.

It is empathy for the ravaged victims and survivors of nuclear war that those in power (and Kinsley) lack; and far better be it to bombard such people with real life, vividly human consequences of the war for which they prepare, than merely to hand them the latest batch of computer modelings "describing" the consequences of a strategic nuclear exchange.

Clayton T. Reed
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Yes, it was a mistake for the Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War to include Soviet doctors. But Michael Kinsley's self-satisfied comments on the doctors' efforts to publicize the effects of nuclear war make me wonder where he has been for the last five years.

It is no longer true that only a demented fringe believes a nuclear war is survivable and winnable. Nuclear utilization theorists, spouting "nuclear war fighting" and "nuclear war winning" doctrines, have been increasingly prominent in academic journals, newspapers, and the campaigns of Republican candidates for president.

Indeed, it is no longer self-evident that "everyone with access to the button realizes that there is no rational reason actually to start a nuclear war, because the result would be dreadful for all sides." I would recommend that Kinsley read the comments of some of the members of the NSC staff, starting with Richard Pipes's writings. Pipes et al. may not have access to the button, but they advise the man who does. Kinsley might also be interested in the comments of Vice President Bush on winning a nuclear war, which appeared in the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Washington Post* last summer.

Given this dangerous trend toward acceptance of nuclear war as a "viable" option, the efforts of physicians to publicize the effects of nuclear war is to be applauded, not smugly dismissed.

Jeffrey D. Porro, Editor
Arms Control Today
Washington, DC

Productivity projections

To the editors:

In his review of the Nader Report, *The Reign of ETS* (*TNR*, April 11), Herbert Gintis writes that "American labor productivity (output per hour of labor) . . . has fallen to one-third its normal rate in the past 15 years" and that "Projected two or three decades in the future, this decline spells . . . a lower standard of living."

He's wrong. What may be confusing him is that labor productivity has been growing at a slower rate than it used to. But in fact output per worker-hour is about 30 percent higher than it was 15 years ago. If we project this trend two or three decades in the future, living standards will be higher, not lower.

Eugene Epstein
New York, New York

Another look at gun control

To the editors:

In his April 11 column TRB quite properly raises the issue of gun control in America. It should be absolutely clear by this time that there are too many deadly weapons in too many hands and pockets in this country.

After 26 years in the practice of criminal law I am skeptical that the guns can ever be effectively "banned." They are everywhere and most of the people who possess them are most unlikely to turn them in. If Congress outlaws their possession millions of them will continue in private hands.

However, guns are worthless without cartridges. The most effective way to deal with the problem lies in a prohibition against the manufacture, transportation, sale, or distribution of specified types of firearms ammunition except to police and security officers. If this happens the guns will become inoperative in a half-dozen years or so. Some of the cartridges will be fired. Others will be lost. And the rest will deteriorate. If Congress ever gets serious about handguns or other types of firearms, this approach seems to offer the best hope for effective action.

Harry M. Caudill
Whitesburg, Kentucky

Author's query

I am writing a biographical tribute to Raoul Wallenberg, the savior of the Jews at Budapest in 1944, and would be interested in hearing from anyone who knew him, in the USA (where he was a student of architecture at Michigan), in Sweden, or in Hungary.

Anna S. Meigs
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'Of matters divine and human'

To the editors:

As a scientific reader, I commend Niles Eldredge for his excellent article, "Creationism Isn't Science" (*TNR*, April 4). It is truly shocking how the mere idea of creationism can pervade this age of genetic engineering and technical advancement. We must remember to heed the words of Francis Bacon, ". . . some of the moderns have indulged this folly of endeavoring to build a system of natural philosophy on the First Chapter of Genesis. . . . This folly is more to be restrained and prevented, because not only fantastical philosophy but heretical religion spring from the absurd mix-

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Cover: Henri Rousseau, "The Hungry Lion," 1905. Article on page 13.

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

April 25, 1981

Calling Reagan's Bluff

After two months of stunned silence, the Democratic response to President Reagan's economic plan is beginning to emerge at last. The apparent strategy is to accept Reagan's premises that we need to prune government expenditures, cut taxes, and increase saving and investment, but to one-up him on the specifics. This is sound politics, and also sound policy. The Reaganites claim correctly that they have a mandate for a leaner government and a more productive economy. But they do not have a mandate for huge transfers of money from the poor to the rich, which is the net effect of their budget and tax schemes. By proposing different but larger budget cuts, and a tax plan that would produce more investment stimulus with a smaller deficit, Democratic congressional leaders have called Reagan's bluff.

Daniel Rostenkowski, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, unveiled the Democratic alternative to Kemp-Roth and the administration's 10-5-3 depreciation plan in a speech on April 9. He would reduce tax rates across the board to help counteract inflationary "bracket creep," and dramatically cut the top tax rate on investment income, but unlike Reagan he also would increase the standard deduction as an incentive to the working poor. These people, most affected by Reagan's proposed tougher standards of desperation in doling out social welfare, would also benefit least from the Kemp-Roth 30 percent cut in tax rates. For business, Rostenkowski offers simplified and more generous depreciation, but without the Reagan plan's defects of distorting investment decisions and sometimes giving more than a dollar of tax relief for each dollar invested.

The Democrats' alternative spending proposal comes from Chairman James R. Jones and his colleagues on the House Budget Committee. It is a modest but judicious emendation of Reagan's hit list. The Democrats would undo some of Reagan's most stonehearted or shortsighted cuts, such as the cap on Medicaid payments ($1.15 billion), part of the food stamp reductions ($650 million), and some of the basic research of the National Science Foundation ($50 million). They would make up this money, and then some, by well-deserved cuts in places Reagan overlooked, such as over four billion dollars of the most easily trimmed fat in the Defense Department. Free of the Republican assumption that government is inept by its very nature, the Democrats come up with almost five billion dollars that can be saved through better administration and greater efficiency. Finally, both in the budget committee calculations and in a statement of "Democratic Economic Principles" adopted April 9 by the House Democratic Caucus, the Democrats assert that the new era of budget stringency must not exclude "tax expenditures"—deductions and credits that cost government revenue and increase the deficit just as surely as out-of-pocket spending.

In the coming negotiations with the administration and the Republican Senate, the House Democrats will have to hoard their bargaining chips. We hope they don't intend to waste any on synfuels and other energy boondoggles, for which they now propose to

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restore about $500 million from Reagan's generally sensible cuts. Similarly, it may be politically appealing but it is not a good use of scarce influence for liberal Democrats to fight to preserve favors for the middle class, such as overgenerous student loan subsidies. If Reagan is willing to take the political heat for ending such treasured but misguided programs, let him. And why take a dying stand against a three-year tax cut scheme? The Reaganites argue, with some sense, that much of the economic benefit depends on people being able to plan ahead. Whatever leverage Democrats have should be applied to the shape of the tax cut, not to its timing.

The Rostenkowski and Jones proposals hardly add up to a genuine Democratic vision of the role of government in the 1980s. For that, we refer you to a budget cooked up by the Congressional Black Caucus in response to President Reagan's challenge that anyone who rejects his program should propose "an alternative which offers a greater chance of balancing the budget, reducing and eliminating inflation, stimulating the creation of jobs, and reducing the tax burden." The Black Caucus budget restores $27 billion in social program cuts by cutting $27 billion in tax loopholes. For example, $1.5 billion raised by making expense-account meals only half deductible would nicely finance $1.5 billion for child nutrition which Reagan feels we can't afford. After a general tax cut and a far superior business depreciation scheme, the Black Caucus budget still would end up with a smaller deficit than Reagan proposes.

For the moment, though, the Black Caucus budget is bedtime reading for liberals. What the House Democratic leadership is offering makes for less inspiration, but more reassurance to those who feared that the opposition party would produce no resistance at all to the Reagan counterrevolution.

A Fool and His Money

Welfare for Your Wallet

A conscientiously greedy liberal must guard against allowing his political opinions to distort his business judgment. In this time of way out and woolly rises in arms expenditures, it is normal to denounce the military-industrial complex and then wonder which big defense contractor to invest in.

Don't. In a number of instances other investors have beaten you to it and pushed the price of military-industrial stocks up. Others have actually fallen back, such as Rockwell International, which is supposed to be up for building the MX missile but is still not much of a stock to invest in. Its dividend has been running somewhat under four percent of the cost of the stock, which means as a source of income you'd do better keeping your money in a savings and loan association so you could watch it being nibbled away by inflation at a somewhat slower rate. Nor are the prospects for a big jump in the price of the stock very exciting, because Rockwell, like a number of companies involved in war production, is a complicated conglomerate involved in a lot of other so-so lines of business that aren't doing terribly well. Although Rockwell's profit margins have been up the last couple of years since Jimmy Carter began retooling the war effort, they're still below the national industrial averages. Let the red, white, and blue boys invest in the big aerospace stuff, while we turn our avaricious snouts elsewhere in search of that most elusive of all ungulates, that highly prized pair in the financial forests, Big Buck and Lotta Doe.

Big profits are to be found in little companies selling something that fits with the times. For that what can be more promising than a company that is cashing in on divorce and the working mother?

That is why the Fool recommends looking into Kinder-Care Learning Centers, Inc., currently selling at around $15 to $16 a share. The dividends are lousy but the prospects for a great rise in the value of the shares are good for this company, which operates 540 preschool daycare centers serving about 55,000 children. The company is growing so quickly it expects to have 700 facilities and 72,000 kiddies by the end of the year.

For these inflation-pushed times, when fewer and fewer undivorced parents can afford to live and raise a child on one salary, Kinder-Care offers a service drooly with potential profit. Some Kinder-Care branches take children as young as 12 weeks, others offer after-school care for children up to the age of 12; there are summer day camps, a drop-off service where the facilities have the space, as well as nice spinoffs in the form of life insurance policies on the kiddlings, photos of baby dear, educational toys, T-shirts, and tote bags.

Since Kinder-Care facilities are located in the suburbs and outlying city areas, their customers aren't dependent on government subsidies. The business should prosper accordingly, regardless of President Reagan's budget cuts, and an investor has the added satisfaction of knowing he's helping to see our children get into the private sector before they get out of diapers. Children who have a publicly traded corporation for a nanny ought to be impregnable against communism or any other form of agitation. If your nursie is traded in the Over the Counter Market (for which see the stock table of your local newspaper) you'll never be a socialist. As the Jesuits used to say, "Give me a child till he's six and I'll give you a Catholic forever."

There are other reasons for betting on Kinder-Care.

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Nick's Picks . . . Bart's Charts

Our fund has recovered nicely this month from its three-month decline, with Bibles, broilers, and steel leading the way. Our hypothetical portfolio is now at its highest point since December 8, although it is still considerably below its peak during its pork-belly heyday. And despite our success this month, we are not quite keeping pace with the inexorable rise in the consumer price index, nor are we doing as well as the Dow Jones Industrial Average. But as we move into the 10th round of this exercise, our mythical fund finally appears to be gaining strength, and with a little bright news on the economic front we could be in very good shape. Of course, if interest rates move up again, as they began to do last week, we are back where we started.

This month the Bible business has meant big bucks for us. Our stock in Thomas Nelson Publishers has gone up 32 percent in the five weeks since we bought it. When Congress approves Reagan's dose of old-time religion and slashes the federal budget, many more of us will be turning to the Good Book for consolation, so we'll stick with this stock for a while.

Our fresh broiler contracts were up over two cents a pound, or over $60,000 from last month's flirtation with financial oblivion. Because about 90 percent of all small commodity-futures traders will be reporting losses to Uncle Sam on April 15 (ourselves included, see below) this would seem an opportune moment to take our modest gain and get out. But although this certainly would be the safe course to take, it also would be the least interesting. When the money is hypothetical, one can afford to take risks. Our most dramatic developments this month have included Nucor's 12-point rise (worth over $20,000 to us) and Gulf's three-point decline to its lowest price in over a year.

As we reported here last month, the attraction of money market funds continues to grow, and each week greater sums are being invested. In recent weeks three to four billion dollars a week have been moving into money funds, bringing the total in all funds to over $116 billion, 35 percent of this having been invested since January 1. The interest we are earning in our money market fund fell from an average 16.3 percent to 14.7 percent this month, and 14.4 percent for the last week. But with interest rates beginning to move up tentatively last week, our return here should be leveling off. For the month, we collected $1,484.

Dreyfus paid us $21,561 in interest in calendar 1980, and this month we had to report that to the IRS, as well as $5,057 in interest from Beatrice Foods and $7,313 from Chrysler Financial, and dividends of $2,588 from MONY and $180 from Nucor. After the $100 dividend exclusion we are allowed (but not on our dividends from MONY which as a REIT is "nonqualifying," according to the feds), we have $36,599 of income to report. We sold our live cattle futures in December for a short-term capital loss of $77,430. The IRS will allow us to deduct only $3,000 of this loss from other income. (The rest may be deducted from capital gains we may have in subsequent years. The $114,842 that we netted from the sale of our pork bellies futures in January will be reported next year). Assuming we had no other income in 1980, we must then pay taxes on $33,599. Claiming a standard deduction, that will cost us about $8,000, depending on our marital status and the number of exemptions we may take.

Deducting this very hypothetical $8,000 from our Dreyfus account, we are left with $98,494 with which to begin round 10. To have some more cash to work with, we are going to follow Harvard University's lead and dump our Citicorp holdings. Harvard sold its $61 million worth of bonds after learning that Citicorp participated in a direct loan to the South African government. The Fool wouldn't want such moralism interfering with our efforts to make money, but we will sell the stock because it appears to be going nowhere. We will get $101,250 for the stock, which after our one percent broker's commission leaves us $674 ahead, hardly worth the trouble. This month's selection is Kinder-Care Learning Centers, which at $13½ a share appears to be a bargain. We will buy 7,400 shares for $99,900 with $999 going to our broker.

After 42 weeks, our portfolio looks like this:

	March 9	April 14
93 Beatrice Foods bonds	$ 79,050	$ 74,284
156 Chrysler Financial Corp. bonds	85,605	93,795
140 Resorts International bonds	89,950	86,800
11,250 shares MONY Mortgage	82,969	80,156
1,640 shares Nucor	107,010	127,305
11,778 shares Templeton Growth Fund	88,099	93,400
2,250 shares Gulf Oil	82,125	75,656
95 fresh broiler futures on margin	56,525	117,800
4,500 shares Citicorp	101,813	
5,300 shares Thomas Nelson	99,375	131,175
7,400 shares Kinder-Care		99,900
Dreyfus Liquid Assets	105,010	97,832
TOTAL	$ 977,531	**$1,078,103**

The score so far (since June 20, 1980):

Consumer Price Index (estimated)	+ 8.1 percent
Dow Jones Industrial Average	+14.2 percent
TNR's Fool Fund	+ 7.8 percent

Bart Rubenstein

Bart Rubenstein is general manager of *Channels* magazine.

Working mothers get a tax credit for child-care expenses, which makes the $40 or so a week charged for the service more affordable. Beyond that Kinder-Care is smack dab in the center of the part of our economy that is growing most, the service industry.

The consequences of this truth aren't being appreciated yet by the Reaganauts in the Treasury Department. They don't understand that our economy has moved so far away from being the manufacturing-centered society of their early manhood that no supply-side growth spurt, not even one over a 10-year period at record-breaking levels, could convert Americans back into being the productive factory workers of yore. "In the race toward services, the United States—how shameful, how distant from Republican hopes—had surpassed (by 1978) even Sweden, which still had

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only 48 percent of its employment in trade and community services," writes Emma Rothschild in her brilliant, pellucid piece, "Reagan and the Real America," in the *New York Review of Books* (February 5). More than half of our employed work force is in services. It has been estimated that more people are employed trying to sell Chevrolets than in making them. In the last decade, America created more than 11 million nonfarm, non-government jobs, virtually none of which were in manufacturing. As Rothschild writes, "Three industries each provided more than a million jobs . . . eating and drinking places, including fast food restaurants; health services, including private hospitals, nursing homes and doctors' and dentists' offices; and business services, including personnel supply services, data processing services, reproduction and mailing. . . ."

That's where the profits and the growth were and that's where, in these labor-intensive, low-pay industries, we can go foraging for our golden nuggets. For that reason, your Fool suggests you look into Beverly Enterprises, the largest chain operator of nursing homes. It has over 340 of them in 16 states with something like 44,000 beds. But a word of caution. Beverly has been buying a lot of homes in an expansion program. (At the moment it looks as though the mom-and-pop operators in the industry are being pushed out by the giants.) This expansion has caused Beverly to borrow plenty, too much for some investors.

This is a risky stock, not to be bought at much more than $17 or $18 a share, since this is a risky business. Uncle Ronald might decide to cut back on the Medicare or Medicaid money that goes to pay for much nursing-home care, although Republicans also have sick loved ones and no way to care for them at home. The industry often has severe labor problems with the low-paid employees it must depend on, although Beverly appears to be trouble-free. Lastly, the nursing home business seems scandal-prone. Six months don't go by without some kind of exposé of patient abuse, something that could depress the price of a perfectly innocent company's stock. It may pay to track a stock like Beverly, see if it does flicker downward when bad publicity hits a competitor, then buy. Who knows, you might make enough money so that if you get sick, you'll have enough dough in your poke to escape having to go to one of those places.

Another one to track is the Comprehensive Care Corporation, the outfit that advertises those care units on TV for the drunk in your family. This has been a very successful stock, but it is now too high to buy even for this profitable, well-run firm. One key to successful investing is patience, waiting until the price of a share in a company you like drops down to a level from which it can rise again, only this time taking you with it to a nice, fat capital gain. In any event, you'll make more money investing in companies that charge for curing lushes than you will by investing in the whiskey business.

Another company like Comprehensive Care is ServiceMaster, an outfit that has proven that the contents of bedpans isn't what you think. One enthusiastic stock analyst, John Hindelong of Lehman Bros., Kuhn Loeb, says about the company: "ServiceMaster has taken the dull function of housekeeping and made it a science. Like in the Army, they used to say, 'There's a right way, a wrong way and the Army way.' Well, there's a right way, a wrong way and ServiceMaster's way to clean hospitals. You do it their way and it works. They've done it in 850 hospitals. It's a company that's right out of the industrial engineer's textbook. ServiceMaster can go to a hospital administrator and tell him a) we're going to save you money, and b) we're going to relieve you of a headache."

As a result the company grows and makes more money year after year. The recent price of the stock is high, around $30, but unless you think people are going to quit getting sick or are going to start volunteering for the chores ServiceMaster performs, this is a very good long-term prospect for investment. You won't get rich immediately, but the Fool predicts you may get to like ServiceMaster over the years almost as much as those hospital administrators.

One more in the medical field for people who want to take a flyer on a new company that has yet to break into the black, the High Stoy Technological Corporation, which manufactures and sells an ultrasound viewing device used for finding gallstones, tumors, and the like. Chaps who've looked into it say High Stoy's instrument gets a quicker, sharper picture than devices costing five times as much. At $18,200 a pop it's said the gismo will make money for a doctor even if it's used only 10 times a week. Since B-Scanner, as it is called, emits no dangerous X-rays to poison you, it is bound to be popular with preventive health types, and since it is supposed to spot malignant lumps in the breast, the American Cancer Society will be High Stoy's unwitting, best salesperson.

No one ever went broke exploiting people's fears, so see you at the deposit line at the bank.

Nicholas von Hoffman

Nicholas von Hoffman is a syndicated columnist.

Staff Addition

With this issue, Hendrik Hertzberg becomes editor of *The New Republic*. Hertzberg was the chief White House speechwriter for the last two years of the Carter administration. He has been a correspondent for *Newsweek*, an officer in the Navy, and, from 1969 to 1977, a staff writer for *The New Yorker*.

Martin Peretz
Editor-in-Chief and President

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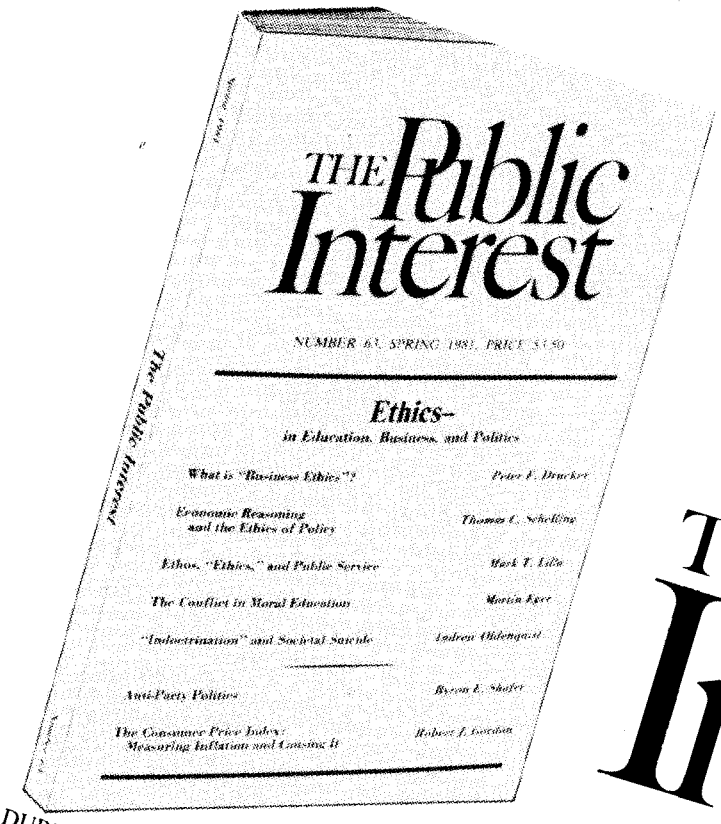
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"What is Business Ethics?" Peter F. Drucker, Clarke Professor of Social Science and Management at Claremont Graduate School, reviews the Western moral tradition and concludes that what we casually call business ethics is mere "ethical chic". A proper understanding of the role of business in society, Drucker argues, would rely on the insights of classical thinkers into the relations of economic behavior with the moral life.

"Economic Reasoning and the Ethics of Policy." Thomas C. Schelling, Professor of Political Economy at the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, analyzes the interaction of ethics and economic factors in policy debates over minimum wages, price supports, health and welfare services, safety and pollution regulations . . . and comes up with some startling identifications of where the ethical issues *really* are.

"Ethos, 'Ethics', and Public Service," by Mark T. Lilla, Managing Editor of *The Public Interest.* In the wake of Watergate, Vietnam, and the CIA controversies, today's schools of public policy and administration increasingly emphasize "ethical analysis." But, Lilla maintains, this "abstract ethical reasoning" is devoid of moral content. The result, he fears, may be to teach future public officials "how to justify their actions with high-flown excuses" instead of the "duties and virtues that make up the moral life of someone in a democratic government."

*July 1, 1979

"Indoctrination and Societal Suicide." Andrew Oldenquist, Professor of Philosophy at Ohio State University, looks critically at the "non-directive" philosophy which, he asserts, dominates moral education in our public schools and the treatment of our juvenile offenders. His unsettling conclusion: a society that denies responsible authorities both the right and the duty to teach children a basic morality is a society that may be committing suicide.

"The Conflict in Moral Education." The carefully documented case study of a conflict that has raged for three years in a Tioga County (N. Y.) school district, by **Martin Eger,** Associate Professor at the City University of New York, College of Staten Island. Eger isolates and illuminates the fundamental, much-beclouded issues that underlie the nationwide controversy over "values clarification" and other programs to teach "valuing" and "decision-making" in public schools.

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Another march for civil rights.

Return to Selma

The humpbacked span of the Edmund Pettus Bridge at Selma is crowded again today with civil rights marchers. Thousands of people have assembled here to walk across the bridge to the site of a 1965 attack on a group of non-violent civil rights activists by Alabama State Troopers. In recent years there have been many symbolic walks across this bridge to commemorate that day and the subsequent success of the historic Selma-to-Montgomery voting rights march.

But the people standing in line today have gathered for something more important than a symbolic walk across the Edmund Pettus Bridge. There will be no more commemorative marches in Selma until the current crisis in American racial relations is resolved. The "spirit of Selma"—a defiant refusal by black and white civil rights activists to capitulate to the forces of segregation—assured the final success of the Selma-to-Montgomery march. And the victory won by that march—the Voting Rights Act of 1965—demolished the southern system of officially sanctioned discrimination against blacks at the polling places. It is as if the marchers have returned to Selma to renew the spirit of Selma, and touch again the last distinct line between right and wrong that existed in this country.

Today, however, the great victory of 1965 seems as remote as the long-ago dream that inspired it. At the front of the march a banner reads "Save the Children," reminding those present of the disappearances and murders of black children in Atlanta, and the racial tensions building there. A group of marchers periodically shouts, "Remember Mobile," recalling the recent lynching of a young black male.

The reminders of Atlanta and Mobile are poignant, but there is another reason we have returned to Selma. The future of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 is in danger in Congress. The act faces the possibility of a repeal and a rollback by the segregationist forces of the recently elected new right wing. The traditional white allies of the civil rights movement now appear indifferent or insensitive to the continuing problems faced by American blacks.

In 1965 those allies had convened in Selma as a "coalition of conscience," bound together by a shared conviction that racial discrimination and injustice were at odds with the future of the nation. Political leaders, labor union officials, and religious leaders stood with rural southern blacks on the Edmund Pettus Bridge. Many of them walked into Montgomery on the final triumphant day of the voting rights march. Those leaders are absent today in Selma, and their absence is recognized by everyone present.

Following the passage of the Voting Rights Act, black voter registration rose from two million to over nine million. Black political representation went up from 400 elected or appointed public officials to around 6,000. But of 17½ million eligible black voters, approximately eight and a half million remain unregistered. Although it is easier today for a black person in the south to register to vote than it was prior to 1965, in many areas potential black voters continue to encounter white hostility and insensitivity that is only slightly less overt. In those days of poll taxes and literacy tests designed to prevent blacks from registering to vote, a familiar question was asked by white registrars of blacks: "How many bubbles are in a bar of soap?" Today white registrars conveniently forget to announce the hours their offices are open, or allow registration only during work hours on weekdays.

The absence of the "coalition of conscience" is a haunting reminder that white America may no longer be listening to the voices on the bridge at Selma. And in the face of the segregationist resurgence by the new right, this absence may also mean that a fight will have to be waged in Congress not only to protect and extend the Voting Rights Act, but also to protect all of the civil rights victories that have been won.

The forces of the new right have their own coalition. But theirs is bound together by a desire to restructure officially sanctioned racial discrimination and to drive a wedge between black and white Americans. Organizations such as the Moral Majority, the Ku Klux Klan, the Committee for the Survival of a Free Congress, the Religious Roundtable, the National Association for the Advancement of White People, the National Conservative Political Action Committee, the John Birch Society, the Eagle Forum, and the American Nazi party share mutual goals of repudiating the hard-won civil rights victories of recent years. With their undisguised programs to restructure racial injustice in the country, these groups promise their constituencies a return to an America that resembles the nation in the days preceding *Brown v. Board of Education*.

The new right has unleashed one of the most sophisticated "code-word" assaults on black America in history. With form letters dated May 2, 1980, and individually addressed to each member of Congress, Moral Majority leader Jerry Falwell enclosed copies of his "Ninety-Five Theses for the 1980s," a peculiar blend of far-right psychobabble and quasi-religious Christian fundamentalist intolerance. Only the most obtuse reader of Falwell's letter, his literature, or his bizarre "Ninety-Five Theses" would miss the implication of his code-word glorification of a "Christian, private school."

Falwell's assault on black America coincided with the introduction in Congress of the Family Protection Act. The combined forces of the new right seem intent not only on eradicating the civil rights victories of recent years, but also on challenging the authority of the Constitution. If the bill were passed, it would force prayer in public schools, thereby jeopardizing the authority of the Supreme Court and instigating a potential constitutional crisis. Furthermore, it would

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prevent legal services money from being used for school-desegregation litigation, and would guarantee the passage of one of Jerry Falwell's "Ninety-Five Theses": "That no law be introduced to force private schools to hire individuals solely to achieve minority-group balance."

So today the spirit of Selma is being renewed on the Edmund Pettus Bridge not to celebrate the stunning victory of 1965, but to prepare to march once more against proponents of racial injustice. Surrounding the speakers' podium near the base of the bridge, hundreds of young blacks—many of them not yet old enough to register to vote—cheer the speakers who defiantly promise that the civil rights victories of the late 1960s and early 1970s will not be repealed.

Johnny Greene

Johnny Greene is a contributing editor of *Harper's*.

Will the voters discard Giscard?

French Syncopation

There will be no landslide for Valéry Giscard d'Estaing this time. He might even be beaten. That, in any case, is the general feeling of the country before the preliminary ballot on April 26, which will cut the field to two candidates for the final election two weeks later. In all probability the two will be Giscard and François Mitterrand, the Socialist candidate.

Traditionally, France enjoys a bit of a scare, but only up to a point: the left tends to prevail *in* the polls but practically never *at* the polls. What De Gaulle used to call *la trouille* (cold feet) always reinforces the right at the last moment. But this year it's not so certain that the country will tremble as much as usual in the voting booths at the prospect of a Socialist victory. Giscard, after 20 years in power—as minister of finance, then as president of the republic—is displaying acute symptoms of an ailment that is often fatal in politics: wear and tear.

The affair of the diamonds—offered by Bokassa, the former African dictator, and pocketed without scruple—shattered something between Giscard and the French people. If the French demand less of their politicians than the Americans do, they are not quite as cynical as they are reputed to be. They even have stopped laughing about the monarchical fever that strangely possesses this servant of the republic. Giscard believes himself to be descended from Louis XV, whom he often describes—against all the evidence—as "the greatest French king." The protocol at the presidential palace has come to reflect these fantasies. At the time of her last official visit to Paris, Margaret Thatcher was served dinner only after the French head of state. The most recent expression of this fever occurred last January 22 when the novelist Marguerite Yourcenar became the first woman to be welcomed into the French Academy. It was a great moment, and, beneath the cupola of the Quai Conti, everyone stood up to applaud. Everyone, that is, except the presidential couple, who remained royally seated.

No doubt these are only the childish whims of a statesman pampered by destiny. But they nourish the accusations of "despotism" that the left makes against him—somewhat fatuously, since the president's power is far less potent than it was under De Gaulle, who was also foolishly depicted as a "dictator" until the day he lost a referendum and resigned. Justified or not, the blows have struck home. The spell is broken.

The balance sheet on Giscard's seven-year term is not completely negative, however. It is not negative at all compared to Thatcher's England, crumbling under demands for work, or Schmidt's Germany, burdened with a declining economy. Under Giscard, France has had one of the strongest economic spurts of all the industrialized nations. But the policies of Raymond Barre, the prime minister, haven't solved either inflation or unemployment, which remain at rates approaching those that brought down Carter in the United States. In short, there is a "depression," as Reagan would say.

Why hasn't Giscard succeeded? Because he hasn't really tried anything. This liberal who wanted to be a social democrat has buried all the great reforms he promised. Between whims and disavowals, Giscardism often has appeared as merely the latest incarnation of French-style opportunism, under the sign of Vichy. The president himself certainly deserved better—but not his timorous policies, which will leave France as they found it, with its bureaucracy all-powerful, its taxes in arrears, its society stagnant.

Thanks to what people sometimes call "Giscardo-decadence," the Gaullists, given over for dead seven years ago, have revived and gained strength. Blessed with shrewdness as well as vitality, their candidate, Jacques Chirac, has given them unity and a style—"Made in USA"—by taking up the theories of Milton Friedman and those of the supply-siders. Like Reagan the mayor of Paris denounces the government by agitating for a program of tax cuts. He has virtually no chance of making the runoff, but his provincial charisma obviously complicates the game for Giscard.

In fact, the real novelty of this election is not the division of the right. It is the complete breakup of the left. And this, paradoxically, places Giscard in danger. Up to now, all the elections were played out around a

Coming:

Michael Kinsley on High Living.

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united left. It was simple. The right and the left each ruled over half of the electorate. On the right, the alliances for the second election were generally between Gaullists and Giscardists; on the left, between Socialists and Communists. But the most recent legislative by-elections demonstrated that the smooth machinery of the past is beginning to go haywire. It has become possible to speak of an "objective" electoral alliance between the Socialists and the Gaullists on the one hand, and the Communists and the Giscardists on the other. After 15 years of relative harmony, French politics has entered an era of syncopation. Everything is becoming complicated. Even though he will probably call for the election of Giscard on the final ballot, Chirac has the air of one ready to go for Mitterrand. And even though Georges Marchais, the Communist candidate, is more likely than not to withdraw in favor of Mitterrand, he clearly hopes for the election of Giscard. One shouldn't be surprised, then, that hovering over this campaign is the smell of murky political deals—"kitchen politics," as the French say.

THE COMMUNISTS probably hold the key to the election: everything depends on the results of their double-barreled tactics. First, to dissuade his own electors from voting for Mitterrand in the second round, Marchais steps up his crude attacks on the Socialist candidate, finding him guilty of "Atlanticism" or of "being in the pay of the bosses." Then, to bewilder any moderates tempted by Mitterrand, he pretends he never broke up the united left after all, and calls for Communist ministers in the cabinet in the event of a Socialist victory. Back in 1978, when the left was in a position to win, the Communist party covered France with posters: "There will be Communists in the cabinet." The effect was immediate. Marchais—half buffoon, half gauleiter, and one of France's favorite television personalities—doesn't hesitate to go even further. Last year, in the name of "proletarian internationalism," he defended the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan—on live television from Moscow. He has taken Brezhnev's side in the Polish crisis. Giscard doesn't need to stir up the specter of communism. Marchais the bogeyman does it for him.

Will the Marchais "syndrome," more Stalinist than ever, again doom the Socialist left to failure? Not necessarily. The break having been made, Mitterrand can hold himself aloof from the CP. "It doesn't seem to me either reasonable or right to think that there could be Communist cabinet ministers," he says, without specifying what majority he means to govern with. And he conducts the low-key campaign of a low-key politician. Once he was the fiercest adversary of General De Gaulle; now he is De Gaulle-like. The man who a few months ago was promising "a break with capitalism within 100 days" now lets it be known that he will not preside at the changeover of society.

Unlike Giscard, who exudes a Carter-style pessimistic realism, Mitterrand proclaims the simplistic optimism of Reaganism in reverse. How should we fight unemployment? Well, just reduce the work week to 35 hours and hire 210,000 bureaucrats—who cares if the French government is already overrun with them? Where will we find the revenue to pay them? Well, we must "tax the machines"—in other words, productive investments. For Mitterrand, who is making his third bid for the presidency, this combination of sanctimonious opportunism and outmoded solutions is not going to trigger the "populist fervor" he prays for. But he has the noble bearing of a Roman senator. It is his luck to have acquired an elder statesman's profile at a time when France is beginning to suffocate under too many years of conservative rule.

Mitterrand has already scored some points—in foreign affairs, for instance, which is one of his fields of expertise. At the outset of the campaign, Giscardist diplomacy had broad support in a country where—according to a survey by the most responsible French pollsters, published in the January issue of *Actuel*—63 percent of the people favored starting immediate negotiations with the USSR if it invaded their territory. The feeling has changed since then: Mitterrand and Chirac have laid bare the naiveté and miscalculation of Giscard, who, just after Afghanistan, decided to meet with Brezhnev at Warsaw in order to safeguard detente—then his favorite word. When *Pravda* solemnly honored the French president as "a prudent, self-controlled man," the Socialist candidate sneered: "That's the payment for Warsaw." Mitterrand is regularly lampooned by Moscow which, to be sure, always favors the incumbent. The Soviet journal *New Times*, with a perfectly straight face, has even classified him as being at the extreme right of the French political spectrum. If Mitterrand is elected, France clearly will not go over to the East. Let Reagan take note.

While waiting for the first round and then the great televised debate—which, in France as in America, will decide the issue between the finalists—France watches drearily, between yawns, the final ups and downs of the most boring election in years. The *Quotidien de Paris* expresses the general sentiment when it rages against a "poverty-stricken campaign" or "promises heard a hundred times before." Stuck with the eternal Mitterrand and the omnipresent Giscard, the country often regrets the withdrawal of Michel Rocard, the passionate standardbearer of a rigorous socialism, but is also beginning to question a political system that permits the emergence of only a quartet of professional politicians, all of the crafty sort. Whoever becomes president of France on May 10 almost certainly will be elected accidentally.

Franz-Olivier Giesbert

Franz-Olivier Giesbert is a reporter for *Nouvel Observateur*. His biography of François Mitterrand won the *Prix d'Aujourd'hui* for the best political book of 1977. This article is translated from the French by Michael Dirda.

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Before the Reverend Jones, there was Comrade Leader Burnham.

Fear and Futility in Guyana

by Shiva Naipaul

It is Guyana's distinction that it has traveled farther along the third world road than any of the other Caribbean territories. In the days before he transformed himself into the comrade leader, Forbes Burnham would often adorn himself in flowing white robes and refer to himself as the "Kabaka"—the kingly title of the ruler of Uganda's Baganda tribe. In Guyana, the atavistic ideal of the Big Black Chief—the archetype so superbly realized by Idi Amin—has, despite the socialist gloss, been almost fully achieved. Although Indians form the majority of the population, black supremacy reigns unchecked.

The Burnham who governs Guyana today was foretold—somewhat eccentrically, it is true—by his late sister Jessie in a pamphlet (titled "Beware My Brother Forbes") published on the eve of the independence. "Often," she wrote, "especially as he grew older I would catch Mother watching Forbes with a worried eye." The Burnhams were staid, respectable, and poor. It was on the bright young Forbes that the family settled its hopes. He was a small boy for his age and was almost daily set upon at school. One can only speculate on the effect these frequent beatings must have had on him. One day she overheard him listing his varied ambitions to their father. He wanted to be mayor of Georgetown, chief justice, the first prime minister of the West Indies, or, failing that, the first prime minister of an independent Guyana. "'Boy, you're mad or what?' asked my father. 'Be sensible and start as a magistrate and work up to be Chief Justice.' 'Magistrate?' retorted Forbes scornfully, 'there're always exceptions and why can't I be one?'" Forbes, his sister says, is a schemer, a plotter, a slick talker, who had steeped himself in Machiavelli's *The Prince*. For him, the end would always justify the means. He ran his party much as King Christophe had once governed Haiti, and if he got hold of the country he would treat it in the same way. "I fear for my country and for my people should my brother Forbes become Premier or Prime Minister." Guyana under his rule was doomed to torment. Nothing since has disproved her fears.

Forbes Burnham has been undisputed king, paramount chief, of Guyana since 1964. But it was only from 1970 on—that was the year in which the country was transformed into a Cooperative Socialist Republic—that he began to thrash around for the left-wing credentials he so conspicuously lacked. The reasons behind his frantic search are not hard to find. Since the middle 1960s, the mood of blacks in the Caribbean had been getting steadily worse. Under the influence of the black power philosophies imported from the United States, they were becoming increasingly restless, increasingly demanding.

The people, it was clear, wanted to remake themselves, to be recast into an image more recognizably third world, more self-assertively "black." They demanded that their governments reflect this new idea of themselves. Burnham, in 1970, had a long way to go. The bloody simplicity of racial politics which had served him so well in the past could no longer guarantee his survival. It would go on being useful, but it would no longer be sufficient. Somehow it would have to be supplemented. By 1970 Forbes Burnham was left without a single left-wing credential. His unsavory political lineage had to be reckoned with at the outset. It was an open secret that he had been installed in power by the CIA and the British Colonial Office. If there was any political party in Guyana with viable revolutionary credentials, that party was certainly not Burnham's People's National Congress. Cheddi Jagan's People's Progressive party alone could claim that honor. Until 1970 Burnham had caused his patrons in London and Washington few headaches. Guyanese bauxite and sugar remained under the control of American, Canadian, and British interests. Guyana did not recognize Cuba—the darling of Caribbean intellectuals. It did not recognize China. It did not even recognize the Soviet Union. The only controversial state with which it had diplomatic relations was Israel. Guyana in 1970 was a model of neocolonial obedience. As if to put his loyalty beyond doubt, Burnham had imposed a tax of 10 percent on all goods from communist countries; doctors trained in those countries were virtually debarred from practicing in Guyana. At home his rule had become illegitimate, based with increasing nakedness on force and fraud.

Badly in need of a new image, Burnham set off for the 1970 Conference of Nonaligned Nations being held in Lusaka, the Zambian capital. Lusaka was the stage set against which he would make his international debut as a third world militant. On his way there he announced that he would be establishing diplomatic

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Shiva Naipaul's most recent book is *North of South* (Simon & Schuster). Copyright © 1980, 1981 by Shiva Naipaul. From *Journey to Nowhere: A New World Tragedy*, by Shiva Naipaul, to be published next month by Simon & Schuster. Printed by permission.

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relations with the Soviet Union. At the conference he spoke impassionedly about the People's Republic of China. Nor did he forget Cuba. He hinted that the Cooperative Socialist Republic might bravely acknowledge the existence of both these pariah states. But the high point was the check for $50,000 which he handed over to President Nyerere of Tanzania—Guyana's contribution to the freedom fighters of Africa. Forbes Burnham, it could be said, had been born again. Dressed in the new revolutionary style, he cut an uncompromising figure.

THERE WAS ACTION to back up the words. Third world militancy, once embarked upon, has a logic that cannot easily be thwarted. Burnham's Guyana was swept away on that tide. In 1971 the Canadian-owned bauxite mines and installations were nationalized. In 1972, at great expense, Guyana staged a Caribbean arts festival. Fleets of limousines were bought for the occasion. Many of the cars were wrecked and abandoned even before the end of the festival. That year saw another display of Guyana's newfound grandeur when Burnham played host to the Nonaligned Foreign Ministers' Conference. For this, fleets of police motorcycles were flown in from Japan. In 1973 diplomatic and other relations were established with Cuba. In 1974 relations were severed with Israel. In 1975 the American-owned bauxite mines were nationalized. The following year the British-owned sugar estates and sugar refineries were nationalized. Socialism—Kabakahood—had come to Guyana with a vengeance.

New Guyana Man had been born. Every citizen was now officially a soldier in the cause of liberation and cooperative socialism. Guyana was overrun by organizations that could be classed as either military or paramilitary.

There was the People's Army, otherwise more prosaically known as the Guyana Defense Force, which had sworn its "unconditional loyalty" not to the state but to the comrade leader himself, because of its profound appreciation of his cooperative socialist philosophy. There were to be hunters, fishermen, and farmers as well as soldiers.

There was the People's Police. They too had taken their oath of loyalty, not to the Guyanese state, but to the comrade leader and his philosophy of cooperative socialism. Their specific task was to unearth "detractors" and "enemies of the socialist revolution"; that is, detractors and enemies of Forbes Burnham, since he, the state, and cooperative socialism were one and the same. They, strange to say, were also expected to be hunters, farmers, and fishermen. As one by no means unfriendly, by no means ironic, commentator remarked, the lack of significant social unrest must be taken as a tribute to their vigilance and zeal. But this had had its drawbacks. They had not been able to do too much hunting, farming, or fishing, "being too busy with the day-to-day administration of law and order and buttressing the regime. . . ." (According to the same writer, the People's Army has suffered from a similar complaint. "Its role at present . . . is one of defending the regime and very little effort is now being given to the other tasks with which it has been optimistically commissioned.")

There was the Guyana National Service. This was designed to be the womb out of which New Guyana Man would spring. Among its tasks were the development and population of the interior and national defense. Its declared aim was to "socialize"—or "resocialize"—the Guyanese. From the age of eight they were to be instilled with a correct sense of national consciousness, a socialist outlook, and unswerving loyalty to their comrade leader.

While on paper membership in the National Service is not compulsory, in practice it has been made so. Admission to the University of Guyana—the country's sole institution of higher education—cannot be had without it. Nor is it possible to find any but the most menial of jobs if one has not served in its ranks. Life in its hinterland camps is, by all accounts, an unpleasant business. Unpleasant and secretive. I tried in vain to get permission to visit one. Like the People's Army and the People's Police, the Guyana National Service, despite the large amounts of money siphoned into it, continues to fall short of its stated ideals—in particular, its agricultural ones. There is still no sign of the cotton or black-eyed peas it is supposed to be growing in vast quantities. Even our indulgent commentator, who approves of the militaristic "paradigm" of development, is gloomy about its achievements. It is, he says, a rigidly authoritarian institution "where functional superiors demand compulsive obedience and inflict punishment . . . its role in nation building is primarily one of buttressing the regime. . . ."

The People's Army cannot perform its developmental role because it is buttressing the regime. The People's Police cannot do any hunting, farming, and fishing because it is buttressing the regime. The Guyana National Service cannot raise consciousness because it is buttressing the regime. But the list is not ended. There are the Young Socialist Movement and the Women's Revolutionary Socialist Movement—this last presided over by Viola Burnham, the wife of the comrade leader. Both are armed; both have sworn fealty to Forbes Burnham; both openly exist to buttress the regime. Crowning it all, there is the People's Militia with its motto, "Every Citizen a Soldier." Its tasks are to support the People's Army and the People's Police and to engage in agricultural work. "Its role in nation building," confesses our commentator, "is primarily one of buttressing the regime. . . ." Guyana, on the eve of the Jonestown massacre, was spending one-sixth of its budget on its military and paramilitary organizations—four times as much as it was spending on health.

In a very real sense, there is no such institutional abstraction as the government left in Guyana. This is

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made explicit in the theoretical fount of Burnhamite cooperative socialism, the "Declaration of Sophia," a speech delivered in 1974 to mark 10 years of his party's rule. It had been decided, the comrade leader said, "that the party should assume unapologetically its paramountcy over the government, which is merely one of its executive arms." The People's National Congress had become "the major national institution."

Over all of Guyana, after that speech, there fell, with unmediated harshness, the shadow of the Big Black Chief. In the Caribbean, only Haiti could furnish parallels to this thorough subversion of the very idea of government. King Christophe had been reborn.

The government, unafraid of precise commitment, had said that it would "feed, clothe, and house" all the people by 1976—a program with which Jim Jones's People's Temple had closely identified itself from its very first days in Guyana. It had provided one of its major justifications for being present in what it called "this progressive South American country." Sixty-five thousand new housing units had been promised by the end of 1976. Only 7,000 had actually been built. The shops had bare shelves. In Guyana it was not easy to find meat, milk, fish, flour, potatoes, rice, cooking oil, sugar. Malnutrition was prevalent. Hungry children and adults combed the refuse dumps. The mayor of Georgetown showed some concern in one of her radio broadcasts. She said she had received complaints that people had been rummaging through the garbage dump near Roxanne Burnham Gardens (named for a daughter of Forbes Burnham). This, she warned, not only was injurious to their health but interfered with the work of the sanitary department. Hospitals had no drugs with which to treat their patients. No wonder that Jonestown with (as we know now) its overflowing pharmacopoeia could boast of the medical miracles it was performing in the northwestern corner of the country; no wonder invalids flew from Georgetown to receive treatment they were denied in their people's hospitals.

The queues of visa seekers outside the embassies of the United States, Canada, and the United Kingdom were growing longer and longer. Emigration was turning into a stampede. Twenty-eight thousand had departed during the previous four years. Altogether over 50,000 people (and this, let it be remembered, out of a total population of 800,000) had left the country since 1965. Strikers were being beaten up and jailed. The streets of Georgetown were lawless. The last traces of freedom had been taken away by the fraudulent referendum on the Constitution. Such was the country in which the People's Temple made its home.

But to the outside world, defying all reality, Guyana could paint quite another picture of itself—and, it seems, be believed. "Africans, Indians, Portuguese, Chinese, Amerindians, Europeans come face to face with each other as Guyanese," says a brightly illustrated publication supplied to all foreign journalists by the Ministry of Information. Guyanese culture, inexhaustibly rich, was a magical blend that fascinated the world. The comrade leader was steering the country with unwavering determination toward its socialist objectives. He had introduced sweeping changes that had brought considerable social and economic benefits. The Guyana National Service had been praised by Tanzania, Zambia, India, Liberia, Venezuela, the German Democratic Republic, Sweden, and Cuba. One hundred fifty varieties of fruit grew on its fertile soil. Agricultural production had increased "manifold." For the first time in 400 years the Amerindians were content. There are photographs of industriously smoking sugar refineries; of powerful machines at work in wavy seas of rice; of sleek cattle; of a street market, each stall a cornucopia; of the comrade leader being mobbed by many-colored throngs of grateful people—his rainbow family. Blessed, bountiful land. The happiness of the people, a European journalist told his readers, had just been made complete by the introduction of a new constitution. It was going to provide equality for women. It was going to ensure that land went to the tiller. It was going to give the right of a free education from nursery to university. Even the comrade leader seemed to tire somewhat of enumerating the virtues of the new constitution. He did, however, warn of the tendency to interpret human rights too narrowly, in terms of purely European or North American experience. That was cultural imperialism. Human rights had to be understood in other than a Western sense. "They hold elections; right, we hold elections. But the more important rights are the rights to a full life. . . . There is a right to be looked after in old age. . . . Those rights are important. . . ." It was his way, I suppose, of saying that Guyana was going to sacrifice the lesser right of holding elections.

"HELLO! Freedom House. Can we help you?" The voice at the other end of the line was surprisingly cheerful, surprisingly friendly.

I had telephoned on the off chance, trying to locate Cheddi Jagan, the leader of the Opposition. Mr. Jagan was out of the country. Nevertheless, I thought I would drop by.

The ramshackle two-story building in downtown Georgetown looked more like the sort of premises usually occupied by old-fashioned Chinese restaurants

Pulitzer Prize Winner
Mike Peters of the *Dayton Daily News*, whose cartoons appear frequently in *TNR*, has won a Pulitzer Prize for editorial cartooning.
THANKS, RONNIE.. WE CAN ALL BREATHE EASIER NOW...
GASP HACK COUGH GASP
DETROIT

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The Jonestown Papers

The new conventional wisdom in Congress and the executive branch is that the Freedom of Information Act is too strong. The intelligence agencies worry aloud about a supposed threat to their confidential sources. Foreign governments are said to fear the undermining of privileged communications. Given the current mood, the cost of public disclosure is bound to receive attention, because it is expensive—in dollars. (At the FBI alone, the Freedom of Information-Privacy Acts branch employs 250 people to process requests.) The benefit to society of literary and historical endeavor is less easy to quantify.

In June 1979 FBI director William Webster proposed sweeping changes in the Freedom of Information Act, including imposing a seven-year moratorium on the release of any FBI documents. Several bills already have been introduced in this session of Congress that would tighten restrictions on release and make the whole process even more expensive and difficult for citizens to use than it is now. Hearings are scheduled for the summer.

As the movement to restrict the act gathered force, I was trying to wrest from five federal agencies an enormous library of documents for study of the Jonestown tragedy. But I found the Freedom of Information Act to be a blunt tool at best. Here was an event for which the act should have worked smoothly and quickly. Most of the participants were dead, including the chief villain, Jim Jones. No national security problems of any significance were involved, and primary materials could clear up the mysteries surrounding the event. But the day when a citizen has the upper hand over the government on disclosure is a long way off. And what success I did eventually have under the act would have been impossible under the greater controls now proposed.

In the days after the Jonestown disaster, when I was in Guyana, I learned that Jim Jones had taped his nightly sessions in the jungle during the last 18 months of his social experiment. Approximately 971 hours of these tape recordings had been carried out of the jungle encampment in a body bag, and eventually made their way to the FBI in San Francisco. The tale that these tapes could tell, more than its California prologue, was the key to understanding the end of Jonestown.

The FBI tapes were the most critical cache, but four other federal agencies held valuable material as well. The Federal Communications Commission had been monitoring Temple communications between Guyana and San Francisco for a year and a half. Some 80 hours of these monitored communications existed in FCC files. The State Department had generated more than 2,000 cables concerning the Temple, and the CIA had documents—how many we probably will never know. With its subpoena power, the congressional committee investigating the assassination of Congressman Leo Ryan had turned up considerable evidence, including interviews with survivors under oath.

In the 14 months after the events at Jonestown, my efforts to gain access to this vast archive under FOIA were repeatedly rebuffed by the government, with a variety of ruses.

The FBI. The FBI consistently denied access to every tape and document in its possession on the grounds that an active criminal investigation into a possible conspiracy to kill Leo Ryan was proceeding. Larry Layton, the Temple gunman who shot two Temple apostates at the Port Kaituma airstrip, was to be tried for attempted murder in Guyana. If he should be acquitted (as he eventually was, despite the indisputable evidence against him), the Justice Department wished to prosecute him for conspiracy here. (Layton's conspiracy trial is scheduled to open on July 9 in San Francisco.)

In numerous letters and legal documents, I argued that under the Freedom of Information Act the government was required to segregate specific documents relating to a specific criminal charge and release all other materials. I suspected (and it later turned out to be true) that less than one percent of all the material in the FBI's possession had any relevance to the charges against Layton. When I demanded that the FBI segregate and release all documents not specifically related to Layton's case—in effect to abide by the law—the bureau insisted it would involve too much administrative time and expense.

The FCC. Any ham radio operator will say that the joy of

than the national headquarters of a major political party. Directly opposite was a tawdry cinema—the Metropole—its billboards scaly with peeling posters advertising forthcoming kung fu films. The Metropole could, in a modest way, be regarded as one of Guyana's historical monuments. It was at a congress held there in 1954 that the original People's Progressive party had split into its Burnham (black) and Jagan (Indian) factions, the former eventually turning itself into the People's National Congress.

Two Indian youths, sitting at a stained and chipped wooden table, guarded the grilled entrance. A sign warned that all bags and parcels would have to be searched. I climbed a long flight of wooden stairs. On the wall facing the landing was displayed a Russian-supplied poster of Lenin—for both of Guyana's main political parties claim to be bearers of the authentic socialist message. It is the official view of the People's Progressive party that the People's National Congress is "reformist" and "opportunist"—in short, it is pseudo socialist. It is the official view of the People's National Congress that the People's Progressive party is a "phrase-mongering, *soi-disant* leftist party"—in short, that it is pseudo socialist. Ideologically, both groups avoid the race issue, the one abiding reality of Guyanese politics. Practically, both parties owe their existence to it. Socialism in Guyana is carried on the back of racial fears and loyalties.

This contradiction, I believe, causes genuine concern among the leaders of the PPP—which does take its socialism seriously. In 1975 Mr. Burnham, his newfound radicalism getting out of hand, had all but alienated his American patrons. There was talk in Guyana of military invasion from right-wing Brazil, from

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his hobby is listening in on conversations from all over the world. Yet to record and disclose monitored communications is technically against the law. When the FCC monitored People's Temple communications (all of which was in rudimentary code in the last six months), it did so under its law-enforcement prerogative. The fact that the Temple communications were in code made them illegal. The FCC tapes were, in effect, seized contraband. The FCC argued that Jonestown was a test of the "confidentiality" of all amateur radio communications. The commission so passionately wanted to maintain this principle it even charged at one point that if it turned over Jonestown communications to me, it would be besieged by racketeers filing FOIA requests. I sued, an expensive process which took a year to complete, and lost. The Temple radio communications remain a national secret.

Congress. After a six-month investigation, the House Committee on Foreign Affairs issued a superficial and half-hearted report on the Ryan assassination, filling the pages of its appendix with reprints of newspaper articles and leaving classified virtually all potentially significant material within its subpoena power. When I challenged the committee on this, its chairman, Clement J. Zablocki, Democrat of Wisconsin, put the committee's documents under lock and key for five years.

The CIA. If ever a group needed CIA infiltration, it was the People's Temple in Guyana. Jim Jones was negotiating with the Soviet Union and Cuba about a move from Guyana to one of those countries, at a time when his community was raking in $40,000 a month in US government benefit checks. Neither of my two requests to the CIA under FOIA has been answered. This is an unsurprising response from the federal agency that is leading the move to gut the Freedom of Information Act. But the silence of the CIA has encouraged professional conspiratorialists to promote crackpot theories of CIA complicity in the Jonestown disaster, in the sure knowledge that no definitive CIA documentation to the contrary ever would be released.

The State Department. In February 1980 the department began to release Temple-related documents. The numbers appeared impressive: over 2,000 cables declassified and released. But the vast majority of those released documents applied to the logistics of the tragedy's aftermath, and the few important documents still remain classified "for national security reasons." Any document relating to the critical exchanges between the American and Guyanese governments on dangerous stirrings in Jonestown remains a state secret.

This hardly makes a case for the monstrous power of the Freedom of Information Act. The new legislation in the hopper will only strengthen the ability of government to hide behind comfortable excuses of national security and law enforcement. Director Webster's proposal for a seven-year moratorium on all disclosure is the most disturbing element in the current discussion. If a moratorium on disclosure were enacted, it would damage the possibility of early, solid studies of confusing contemporary events which have diplomatic or criminal aspects. As it is, a citizen cannot compel these agencies to separate the warp and the woof, especially in a design as complicated as Jonestown. It is easy enough now for the government to plead excessive expense when it really means laziness, to plead strains on its bureaucracy when it really is masking embarrassing official behavior. It could be even easier in a year.

In February 1980 I finally did gain access to the Jonestown tapes. But in the end the breakthrough was not produced by the Freedom of Information Act, working as it should—with speed and in the interest of enlightenment. When virtually every other public official blocked disclosure from trivial institutional concerns, only Attorney General Benjamin Civiletti was compelled by the overriding social benefit of disclosure. In questionable cases, if left to the bureaucracy, secrecy will always win over openness. Civiletti turned aside the recommendations of his own staff and of the FBI, and directed that a compromise be worked out with me. Once the FBI was ordered to focus on the matter, it kept from me only 25 tapes out of 971. A year from now, another attorney general might not have the discretion to make a visionary decision in the interest of history.

James Reston Jr.

James Reston Jr.'s most recent book, *Our Father Who Art in Hell: The Life and Death of Jim Jones*, has just been published by Times Books.

Venezuela. The Socialist Revolution, beleaguered by imperialist enemies, threatened by CIA subterfuge, was in danger! The PPP, which had been boycotting the National Assembly after the frauds and murders accompanying the 1973 general election (the election in which the People's Army had intervened and seized ballot boxes), changed its policy. Declaring that his party did not have a monopoly on socialism—and believing, no doubt, that a little bit of pseudo socialism was better than no socialism at all—Dr. Jagan announced a policy of "critical support" for the government. For the first time in many years, Cheddi Jagan and Forbes Burnham shared the same platform, avowing a common purpose in defending the country against the encircling imperialist forces. There were some within the PPP who thought that the policy of critical support did not go far enough. One of the party's leading theoreticians ("That man *knows* his Marxism," a former comrade of his said to me) suggested that they give the government "unconditional support." He went even further than that; he advocated to the PPP that it liquidate itself. The party did not laugh. It actually debated the proposition that it commit collective suicide—or maybe I should say revolutionary suicide.

In the end, the PPP demurred. The man who knew his Marxism defected to the comrade leader, saying that the PPP were Mensheviks and the PNC were Bolsheviks. He was rewarded with the directorship of the Cuffy Ideological Institute, the powerhouse of cooperative socialist doctrine.

The qualified rapprochement between the two parties did not last long, foundering on the controversy generated by the then newly created People's Militia; it

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had soon become clear that it was to be composed almost exclusively of the PNC's black supporters. Dr. Jagan withdrew his policy of critical support. It was all such a shameful waste. The Cubans, who were providing the arms and the training for this "popular" body of mass defense, had (so, at any rate, I was told by a mournful PPP man) gone so far as to produce blown-up photographs of both the leaders—as necessary a prerequisite for this sort of activity as arms and training. Such are the pitfalls of socialist politics in Guyana.

In retrospect, it seems amazing that Forbes Burnham and Cheddi Jagan ever could have worked together. As it was, their alliance had begun to crumble at the first temptation of power—immediately after the 1953 general election. Burnham had instantly thrown the victorious party into turmoil by demanding the leadership. There is another interesting incident connected with the 1953 election. When the newly elected PPP legislators marched from their headquarters to the opening session of the legislature, they made quite a splash in their white sharkskin suits. "The decision on attire," Cheddi Jagan wrote afterward, "had been made by Burnham while I was [away]. . . . If it had been left to me, I would have selected a simpler and less conspicuous outfit." Those sharkskin suits were as telling an omen as Burnham's earlier bid for the leadership. Guyana had, in a sense, started on its long and ostentatious march to tragedy.

JANET JAGAN—Dr. Jagan's American-born wife—greeted me in her small office. I remembered her formidable reputation. A Marxist of many years' standing, she had held a number of important posts in the troubled administrations formed by the PPP between 1953 and 1964. In the 1950s she had featured prominently in the political demonology of the British Caribbean, her adversaries painting her in the starkest colors they could mix. She was held to be an almost Mephistophelean force, forever urging her husband on to new acts of extremism. She was the dark power behind his communist throne, the hardest of hard-line ideologues, a creature in thrall to the Kremlin.

Her fame spread to England. In 1953, the London *Daily Mirror*, commenting on the events leading to the suspension of the British Guiana constitution in that year, branded her thus in a headline story: "Janet Britain-Hater—Hatred of Britain is Mainspring that makes Mrs. Jagan tick." It was all very heady stuff, and she suffered the consequences. She was subjected to a banning order restricting her movements. Later, she was imprisoned, sentenced to three months at hard labor. On the eve of Dr. Jagan's removal from office in 1964, a rumor was spread that she had stabbed to death a party colleague in Freedom House.

Janet Jagan in the flesh bore no resemblance to her once bloodcurdling image. She was a small, frail-looking woman, unassuming and low-key in manner. She explained that she was busy working out the details of a party rally. We agreed to meet for dinner at the Pegasus the following evening.

The atmosphere in Freedom House was austere. In that ramshackle, Chinese-restaurant ambience (I half expected to see fly-blown paper lanterns hung with tassels), the mysteries of the revolutionary process, of the revolutionary consciousness forging itself, became palpable. I was surrounded by believers, by men and women possessed of and possessed by a faith.

I was introduced to a man who had been to Cuba on a prolonged visit. I asked him what he had been doing there.

"I was attending some seminars."

"What were the seminars about?"

He looked at me with cold irony. "They were about all different sorts of things."

"What sorts of things?"

He smiled hieratically, not answering. It was as if he had been initiated into rites that could not be communicated to the profane. His Cuban experience was sacrosanct. He would divulge nothing of what had transpired there. I observed that his colleagues treated him with respect, that with them too his behavior was ponderously hieratic. After a while, I gave up my attempts to make conversation with him.

There was a pretty young girl who had just returned from Lumumba University in the Soviet Union.

"Are you a Communist?" I asked.

"Not yet."

"What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that my consciousness isn't fully developed. Being a Communist isn't just a matter of saying so. It takes time and effort. I still have a long way to go."

She frightened me.

AT THE PEGASUS, Janet Jagan was waiting for me in the lobby. When I arrived, she was in conversation with an impeccably dressed black man. We were introduced. The man excused himself briefly while he greeted another acquaintance. Mrs. Jagan told me that he was formerly a stalwart of the PNC and an old enemy of hers. He had occupied a reasonably influential position in the PNC hierarchy and had often behaved with particular viciousness toward her. But now (I was not told why) he was out of favor and jobless. She had just happened to run into him in the lobby while waiting for me. Sooner or later, everyone, even old enemies, will meet in the Pegasus. The man returned. I invited him to join us for a drink.

"You can't imagine what it's like looking for a job in Guyana," Mrs. Jagan said as he walked toward the bar. She gazed with what seemed to be genuine sympathy at her now-fallen enemy.

When we were seated, the conversation, as it always tended to in Guyana, drifted around to Mr. Burnham. All roads, in due course, led back to him. Did he really believe in anything at all? I wondered aloud.

"He believes in one thing," the man said. "Himself. That's the only ideology he has. I have to laugh when

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he calls himself a socialist."

"Not *socialist*," Mrs. Jagan corrected with a smile. "*Marxist-Leninist*."

"He doesn't know the first thing about Marxism-Leninism."

"Of course," Mrs. Jagan said. "But he claims to be one; therefore we must call him one."

"Okay. Marxist-Leninist. A Marxist-Leninist who drinks only Chivas Regal. Meanwhile, the people starve." Burnham, he went on, loved power for power's sake. And if there was one thing that rivaled his love of power, it was his love of money and luxury. His greed was boundless. He had accumulated more wealth than he or his children or even his grandchildren would ever need. Yet he ceaselessly looked for more.

"When did you see the light?" Mrs. Jagan asked drily.

The man looked suave. Finishing his drink, he took his leave.

I asked Mrs. Jagan what she thought of Burnham.

"A slick cynic." Only very rarely did they meet socially. When she rose to speak in the National Assembly, he would shout, "Sit down, you stupid American!" He said that again and again.

Did she ever despair of the PPP's returning to power?

"No!" But naturally, after 15 years in the wilderness, it was impossible not to feel twinges of hopelessness now and again.

What messages did Jonestown have for her?

"Beats me how so many people could fall for that. I think there were a lot of social misfits involved."

Was that all?

She laughed apologetically. "I'm sorry. I'm so completely wrapped up in day-to-day politics I haven't had the time to think properly about it. I suppose there are deeper meanings to the whole business. . . ." She shook her head wearily. "We tried to raise the issue in the National Assembly—to have a debate, you know. But the Speaker wouldn't allow it. He more or less said it wasn't worth a debate."

Why not make a fuss? Why not stage a walkout or something like that?

"We have walked out too many times." She laughed again. "It's ceased to have any effect."

Even the massacre of 1,000 people could be absorbed without disturbance into Guyanese political realities. The PPP attitude seemed to be largely confined to muttering and theorizing about CIA plots to discredit socialism.

OUR CONVERSATION reverted to the PPP's chances of coming back to power. The year 1978, leaving aside the Jonestown debacle, had been a particularly bad one for Burnham. His popular appeal had all but vanished. New levies were biting hard into pay envelopes. The Trades Union Congress had actually proposed a general strike, though nothing had as yet been done about it. Agriculture was in a terrible state—before coming to meet me she had been subjected to hours of complaint by rice farmers. Burnham had gone for quick industrialization, but it had not worked. The PPP line was that the country must build from a strong agricultural base. The party was calling for a "Patriotic Front of National Unity."

I LISTENED. How often over the past 15 years, I wondered, had its leaders scanned their Marxist charts and, discovering all the forces of historical inevitability to be in perfect alignment, predicted that the end of the regime was in sight? that the "contradictions" could no longer be sustained? that the long years of waiting were nearly done and the construction of the New Jerusalem (patterned on Cuba) was at last to begin?

They had, I was saddened to see, become part of the Guyanese futility, prisoners locked up beyond hope of rescue in the cages wrought by their Marxist ideology. Fifteen years of useless battle had taught them nothing, leading only to staleness and stagnation, to the interminable repetition of bankrupt formulas. They had nothing to offer but their sincerity; they inhabited a make-believe world, a sort of Marxist dollhouse, populated by Mensheviks and Bolsheviks. Why is the idea of cooperative socialism as such (I do not refer to its Burnhamite parody) condemned as "revisionist" and "downright reactionary"? What purpose does it serve to describe the PNC as petit bourgeois, bureaucratic bourgeois, et cetera? Whence the "changed correlation of class forces" that allows Guyana the possibility of becoming a second Cuba? The parroting of textbook abuse and textbook hope was worse than pointless. It was worse than pointless because it created false pictures; because the words described nothing that existed and could only lead Guyana further and further away from any understanding of its condition.

A child could understand that the PNC was a black-supremacist party of the worst kind, a projection into public life of savage instincts and gangster ideology. But not, it appeared, the PPP. The racial question was reduced to a footnote, an inconvenient warp in the rigid theorems of their Marxist geometry. Guyana, Janet Jagan had written, "is not in reality a stratified, racially divided nation." Well, what was Guyana if it was not a racially divided nation? Mr. Burnham would, quite justifiably, laugh. For 15 years he had lived off the spoils of racial division. He, at least, understood the situation. In the PPP scheme, racism is scaled down to a "malpractice." It was a distortion introduced by the British colonialists and, later on, exploited by CIA intrigue. Race was an artificially created antagonism. Once that was understood and appropriate action was taken to counteract its baleful influence, the antagonism would disappear of its own accord. Indians and blacks would then join hands and walk bravely into their predestined socialist future. Such touching misapprehensions can have no other effect than to compound the Guyanese tragedy.

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Books and the Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on films

Culture Exchange?

When I hear the word "culture," I too reach for my revolver. Thought-revolver. Seeing does it for me just as well as hearing: films that are strong cultural manifestations make thoughts revolve. The cultural factors are sometimes the most engaging factors about a film. As witness these two pictures.

Murray Lerner—who, I ought to note, was once a teaching colleague of mine—has made a good documentary directly addressed to cultural concerns. *From Mao to Mozart: Isaac Stern in China* (which just won an Academy Award) chronicles the violin virtuoso's extensive tour of China in 1979 during which he gave some recitals and concerts and held many classes with instrumental students—especially violinists, of course. Lerner's film is made with high professional skill. The interactions of Stern and students and audiences and hosts are handled with a variety of emphases that avert any draggy repetitiveness. Just enough of the cities and the (gorgeous) countryside is painted in to establish where all this is happening. The film discloses easily what a quick and sympathetic teacher Stern is; and it measures just the right amount of ceremonial speechmaking and toast-exchanging to create a sense of occasion without yawn. Also, there is one unexpected, extraordinary passage: a long account in English by the deputy director of the Shanghai music conservatory in which he speaks with dignity and restraint of his harsh imprisonment during the Cultural Revolution because he is a professor and devotee of Western music.

Lerner's film is also—for me, predominantly so—full of cultural paradoxes. The weight of Stern's criticism of the Chinese violinists is that they play notes, not music. In Mozart, in the romantics, he says, what the Chinese lack is feeling, line, shading, phrase, dynamics, *song*. "Music doesn't exist for the violin," Stern tells them, not superfluously, "the violin exists for music." He and his accompanist, the fine American pianist David Golub, agree that the child musicians, around 10 or 11, are better in these regards than the people around 20; and Stern is told that the older ones suffer from the anti-Westernism of the period they lived through.

This explains, and doesn't explain. The youngsters may be better than the youths, though to one listener's ears the difference was more in aptitude for change than in innate color, but can these youngsters keep and develop what Stern was telling them? In a musical tradition that has nothing to do with the *cultural* ideas that Stern conveyed? With Stern, we visit Chinese musicians playing Chinese music on Chinese instruments, music and instrumentalists quite outside the effects of the Cultural Revolution, and as far as I could hear—which is precisely the point—the music on these instruments had no line or coloring and had no ambition toward it.

I once saw professional American actors in a Kabuki play directed by a Japanese expert who had come to New York and had rehearsed them for weeks. It's the one Kabuki performance I've seen that has come closest to affecting me and is therefore the one I "trust" least. I don't know how well the English language served the text, but the very nearness to me of the experience, I'm sure, weakened its cultural identity.

I'm not arguing for parochialism, non-exchange, separatism. I'm not in fact arguing anything: I'm reconciling myself to, as I take them, inevitabilities. When I see Kurosawa's *Ikiru* or Ozu's *Tokyo Story*, I am shaken to the core by immediacy and empathy: differences of language and dress and custom only make the central matter more affecting because its global truth is all the more certified. But Kabuki is nothing *but* its difference from us, so to speak; and so, I would venture, is Mozart to most Chinese.

Stern visits some rehearsals of the Peking Opera—what we would call acrobats and jugglers—whom I first saw in London in 1956. They've since toured the US, and if you haven't seen them, you can't believe what they can do. If you have seen them, you still can't believe it. Their accomplishments—I can't call them tricks—are not the result of training such as Western acrobats and jugglers get, even in Western circus families. They are one species of attitude toward life. We see other shots of Chinese actors rehearsing highly stylized Chinese plays. What is there in the nation, the culture, that produced these activities that can deal with Brahms? In anything more than the way that the American actors played Kabuki?

I hope more American actors play Kabuki. I hope every Chinese music student plays as much Western music as possible and gets the chance to study with Western musicians even half as accomplished as Stern. But the film left me with the opposite of the feeling of one world culturally—in possibility or even in desirability. *Vive l'échange*. But also *vive la différence*.

Non-irrelevant Note. Every person seen in this film except Stern is thin. A historical comment, if not a strictly cultural one. Will those 10-year-old Chinese violinists associate romantic violin coloring with obesity?

Films Worth Seeing

Image Before My Eyes. A fascinating, implicitly moving documentary about the varieties of Jewish life in Poland before 1939.

Kagemusha. Kurosawa's epic about war in 16th-century Japan. Not his best, still easily magnificent.

Oblomov. Goncharov's great novel is fairly well served in this Soviet picture. Emphases are altered, but the central state is there.

Raging Bull. Robert De Niro as a crazed, sane fighter in a chunk of urban bile-and-anger well directed by Martin Scorsese.

SK

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Thoughts about culture also kept running through my head during James Caan's new film *Thief*, which I saw just after the Stern documentary. *Thief* is an instant hit, says *Variety*, and I kept thinking about the culture that wanted it so badly, to which and out of which it spoke.

First, the music by a group called Tangerine Dream. The film is about a professional safecracker, and the music is loudest during the long episodes of safecracking. It's not music in any conventional melodic sense: it's loud, sustained sound, with electronic components and strong rhythmic pulse, that is as close to sheer neural excitation as possible. It is stimulus, not music, meant not only to do the usual heightening of a film score but to transport, to blast the viewer-listener off the earth, out of daily life, out of usual considerations. The music is supposed to link us somewhere "out there" with Caan while he's doing his extra-social job.

In outline the script of *Thief*, by Michael Mann (who directed) from a book by Frank Hohimer, is only one more perfect-heist story. Some of the dialogue is nitty and some is airily nutty, but we see, early on, that the film is aiming at more than clever criminal maneuvers that succeed or don't succeed: it wants to create a near-humanoid protagonist, a man who was brought up in a state institution, was imprisoned when young for a small theft, spent 11 years in the clink, and came out all steely eyes and id. This isn't a tale of adroitness versus the police; it's a portrait of a man who drives ahead like the steel bits that he uses against immense jewelry vaults.

The picture's real flaw is that it doesn't stick to its guns. It has to make Caan a movieland individualist, who stands out against the mob boss and the crooked cops itching for a piece of the action. Where would this man get the idea or the desire for anything like the heroism involved? Also, the picture has to give him a flowers-in-the-gutter romance with an ex-drug-smuggler, Tuesday Weld, whom he marries. The filmmakers seemed afraid to chew what they had bitten off: an amoral man. The best scene outside the safecrackings is the one in the adoption agency after Caan's marriage when he blows up obscenely because they won't give him and Weld a baby. That contradiction was right. The rest of the character touches were much too conventional for the character territory staked out.

Caan is quiet and angry and quietly angry. Weld is weatherbeaten poetry once again, well-thumbed. Robert Prosky, who for years has been a mainstay of the Arena Stage in Washington, DC, makes his film debut (I think) as an avuncular crime biggie—*that* part, but he's OK in it, chiefly because his face is fresh on the screen.

Put aside such questions as where Caan learned to use complex technical equipment and to deal with technical problems almost as an engineer might. What we're left with is a demon driving toward diamonds with high-pitched screaming music on the sound track. Something about the coldness, the bite, the figurative zoom away from everything that's nagging us daily, is now thrilling millions. In our culture.

Robert Brustein on theater

The Strategies of Adrian Hall

Providence, Rhode Island, is not the most likely city in which to create an important theater, but Adrian Hall, its founder and artistic director, has been working diligently at that task for the past 17 years. His Trinity Square Repertory Company is currently performing in an abandoned vaudeville house, whose marble stairways and vaulted stained-glass domes provide shabby-genteel reminders of a more opulent age of entertainment. Like most theater enterprises in urban centers, Trinity shares the block with adult book stores and topless bars. Just a few streets away, a mammoth concrete convention center offers additional competition from visiting rock bands. Although this is hardly an inviting environment for imaginative theatrical experiences, Hall has built a subscription audience that now numbers over 14,000 theatergoers, whose attention he captures through an unusual blend of repertory

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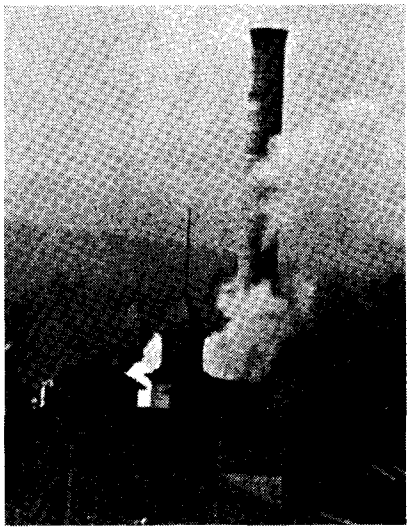

Clean Coal Dirty Air

or How the Clean Air Act Became a Multibillion-Dollar Bailout for High-Sulfur Coal Producers and What Should Be Done about It

Bruce A. Ackerman and William T. Hassler

A remarkable study exposing the breakdown of policymaking in Congress and the Environmental Protection Agency. The authors show how EPA's program to cope with acid rain threatens to make the program worse, not better. They conclude with a thoughtful program for institutional reform—especially timely in light of the forthcoming revision of the Clean Air Act.

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chestnuts and innovative techniques.

Adrian Hall's journey has not been a smooth one. Not too long ago he barely survived an effort on the part of his board to oust him from his own theater. At that time Trinity was administered by a controlling organization called the Foundation of Rhode Island, which purchased the vaudeville house and shouldered much of the responsibility for the fundraising. After offering a particularly challenging season, including James Purdy's *Eustace Chisholm and the Works* which shocked the city with its frankly homosexual theme, Hall found his position threatened; he kept his balance only through the unified support of his company and the outcry raised by other theater people throughout the country. In the ensuing political struggle, Hall managed to establish his supremacy, fire the antagonistic board members, and form a new board with people more sympathetic to his aims. The Foundation still owns the physical theater, but Hall is now in full control of the artistic end of the operation.

It is a common enough story; only the happy ending is unusual. The history of the resident theater movement is studded with conflicts between artistic directors and their boards—conflicts which are almost always resolved in the victory of management. André Gregory was fired from the Theater of Living Arts; John Hancock and William Ball were both sacked by the Pittsburgh Playhouse; five different directorships have succeeded one another at the Vivian Beaumont; Frank Dunlop was forced to abandon the BAM company after a couple of seasons; Alvin Epstein was given his walking papers by the Guthrie after only one season; after only three productions Gerald Freedman was canned by the American Shakespeare Festival; Jay Broad was forced to leave PAF Playhouse right before it folded; Robert Kalfin has just been separated from the Chelsea. I could go on with this casualty list, but even a partial account is enough to suggest the carnage on the battlefield. Some of these victims are among the boldest artists working in the American theater; but for a variety of reasons, including sour audience response, bad financing, hostile press attitudes, and internal warfare, they all have been forced to learn that functioning as artistic director in the American resident theater is equivalent to operating as tail gunner on a B-25 bomber during World War II. As a result, many have reenlisted in the regiments of the commercial theater, which now have begun to look almost safe by comparison.

Hall abandoned the commercial theater—which he had joined after an early start working in Houston with his own company and then in Dallas with Margo Jones—complaining of the "loneliness" of being an actor or director on Broadway. Having decided to negotiate the minefields of the resident theater, he then went on to build a loyal and gifted company. The benefits of his labor can be seen by comparing the Trinity Square production of Erdman's *The Suicide* with the subsequent Broadway production. Both had the same director—Jonas Jurassis—but whereas in Providence the play displayed simplicity, imagination, and ensemble strength, in New York—where it was later staged with a different cast and a different design—it seemed overproduced, clumsy, and too heavily tilted toward its British star, whose performance was out of sync with that of the American supporting cast. Hall's theater took the initial risk on this important unknown play; the Broadway production, and those that followed in other resident theaters covered by the New York press, received the credit.

Although Hall is often hospitable to serious writers (Trinity was the first to stage Robert Penn Warren's *Brother to Dragons*), not all of his play choices are equally adventurous. Whether because of community pressure or because of personal inclination I cannot say, but in addition to the omnipresent *A Christmas Carol* (the winter annuity of virtually

THE HOUSE DESTROYED BY FIRE

Arrangement preserves. The way a calm tureen
of fish soup hubs our circle or a stripped oak
table anchors its room. Order, unseen
at first, settles like fine ash. Our talk
glimmers. A candle set behind glass
fences the crickety dark.
Not knowing what
went first, I have to imagine chaos:
a tongue licking out from the woodstove that
hissed *kitchen* all day, a spark in the new
socket chasing its wire like a fuse,
rags waking to a slow smoulder below
the floorboards. More details sprout—quick shadows
jagging papered walls, the rows of spice tins
exploding, reams of typing like wild
cabbages of flame.
Once it's begun,
description stuffs itself sick. That charred field,
blanched by now, is probably filled with bugs.
The fieldstone lattice that cut out each odd square
of room has faded under weeds. Only dregs
remain: littered, still tantalizing, as the fear
of loss grows ragged, peculiar, seedy.
Spare work set our table, arranged the taste
that opens that time now. Let memory
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The Riddle of THE SMITH: #3

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every major resident theater in the country), the Trinity schedule is often heavily dependent on the ghosts of Broadway past—stuff like *Born Yesterday*, *Sly Fox*, and *Arsenic and Old Lace*. Hall's commitment to American drama is unquestionably sincere, and it is hard to imagine him producing anything he doesn't believe in. On the other hand, his play selection seems to be influenced by his awareness that, being the only show in town, Trinity is obliged to provide conventional entertainment in return for audience tolerance toward less familiar presentations. These kinds of bargains reflect the central dilemma of the undersubsidized American theater.

Adrian Hall has devised a number of strategies with which to solve this dilemma; one of them is currently on display in his production of Jerome Lawrence's and Robert E. Lee's *Inherit the Wind*. This 1950s warhorse is hardly a play that sophisticated theatergoers have been clamoring to see—but Hall was apparently attracted to it because of the recent revival of interest in the creationist issue. For Hall, it also had a certain nostalgic value. According to a program note, he participated in the very first reading of the play when it was about to be done in Dallas, and by coincidence played an extra in the Broadway production starring Paul Muni. One can imagine the excitement with which he seized on a relevant, well-remembered work, only to discover, with dismay, how dated and melodramatic the writing actually was.

What still work in *Inherit the Wind* are the courtroom scenes—the ideological confrontations between Matthew Brady (William Jennings Bryan) and Henry Drummond (Clarence Darrow) over the guilt or innocence of Bertram Cates (Scopes) regarding his teaching of Darwin's evolution theory. Hall has had the wisdom to excise virtually everything extraneous to this debate. By devising an adaptation that amounts almost to co-authorship, he has chosen to concentrate exclusively on the issues raised by the monkey trial and, more recently, by the trial in California over a Moral Majoritarian demand to teach the story of creation theory in the schools. As a result, Hall has removed the tepid love story and most of the folksy local color; he has also cut the compromised ending (common to most plays of the 1950s, beginning with *The Caine Mutiny Court Martial*) where the victorious protagonist extols the hidden virtues of the defeated antagonist, thereby reinstating him in the affections of the audience, while the true villain of the piece is revealed to be the critical "intellectual" (here an H. L. Mencken figure called E. K. Hornbeck).

In place of these excised glories, Mr. Hall has interpolated an extraordinarily imaginative prologue, including an actual interview with Ronald Reagan on the subject of evolution (the president being among those who believe creationism deserves equal time with the mere "theory" of Darwin), a satirical combat between placard-wielding proponents on both sides of the question, and a colloquy on "Good Morning, America" on the subject of cloning. With the action entirely enclosed within Eugene Lee's massive expressionist courtroom, where the First Amendment has been engraved in stone, the evening begins with a dazzling display of theatricalist virtuosity before settling down to the actual trial itself, reenacted by this company in a grand emotional style.

Hall's editing is so effective that you are well into the last act before you begin to question the quality of the text, and out of the theater before you have recovered your own identity. One of Hall's artistic intentions is to let the audience know what we are and what is expected of us. By casting us as spectators in the courtroom, directly engaged by all the actors, Hall has managed to

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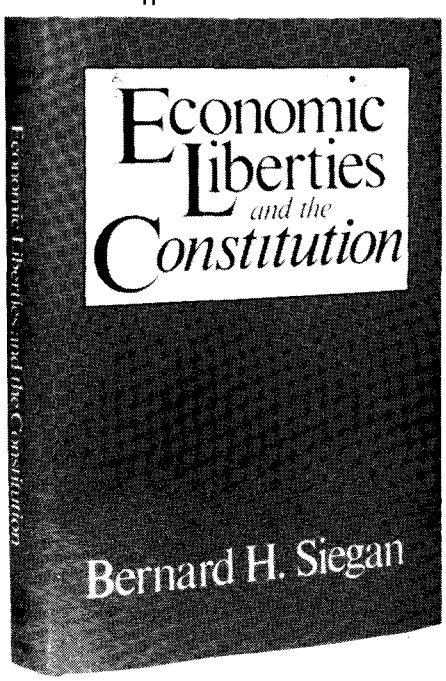
shows how far we have drifted from protecting basic liberties that the Framers of the Constitution sought to secure. I recommend it highly."– **Edwin Meese,** Counselor to the President



ECONOMIC LIBERTIES and the CONSTITUTION

Bernard H. Siegan

In this challenging book, Siegan declares that, if the Supreme Court were doing its job as the Framers of the Constitution and the Fourteenth Amendment intended, the nation would be much less burdened with excessive economic regulation. He points out that, while the Court is zealous in terminating state laws that threaten free expression, sexual privacy, or religious observance, since the 1940s it has done nothing about laws that limit the right of individuals or private corporations to engage in legitimate economic activities.

The result has been to give governments at all levels much greater power over the economic system and to harm society by inhibiting production, raising prices, curtailing competition and creating unemployment. Those most often harmed, concludes Siegan, are those who were supposed to be protected– people on the lowest rung of the economic ladder. 383 pages. $19.50

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make the whole business powerfully immediate, even electrifying, meanwhile creating an entirely new context for a seemingly obsolete play.

In so doing, he has boldly addressed one of the knottiest issues of the contemporary theater: "I suppose the arguments of what is the 'definitive production,'" he writes in his program note,

> will always exist with people who love the theater but the problem remains how to make the theater experience unalterable, like a painting in a museum or a novel. Why can't plays and play production be standardized like an auto assembly line? The answer of course is because the elements that constitute the theater experience: the text, the production values and the audience are all altered by time. And the theater event always occurs *right now*! That's why a popular play of the 1930s can't be viewed in the same way today as it was then; time has changed the meaning of the text, the production values are not the same but what has been most changed, of course, is the audience!

In grappling with the questions of the inviolability of the text and the desire for "definitive productions," Hall is going right to the heart of the problem confronting the contemporary theater artist in his relationship to the audience —the need to distinguish between an art frozen in time and one that is fluid, spontaneous, alive. What is more, he is finding imaginative ways to solve the problem. Providence is lucky to have Adrian Hall and his gifted company; so is the American theater.

Reconsideration: R. K. Narayan.

India's Master of Comedy

by A. G. Mojtabai

The occasion for this essay is the reissue by the University of Chicago Press of three early novels by R. K. Narayan: *Swami and Friends*, *The Bachelor of Arts*, and *The English Teacher*. As the author of 25 books in English—novels, stories, renditions of the great Indian epics—Narayan should need no introduction. Yet he does, even now, and to Americans especially, for he walks very quietly among us, seems to have no pressing business, and we are all very busy—scurrying, scheming, shouting—too busy to notice.

Too busy by far.

He was born Rasipuram Krishnaswamier Narayanaswami in Madras 75 years ago. "Rasipuram" is the name of his family's ancestral village, and "Krishnaswami Iyer" the name of his father, who was headmaster of a government school in Mysore.

Narayan's scholastic career was singularly undistinguished. After several unsuccessful attempts, he finally received his BA at the advanced age of 24. Whatever his feelings were at the time, in his recent autobiography, *My Days*, Narayan has chosen to record only his settled opposition to the entire educational proceeding: "I was opposed to the system of being prescribed a set of books by an anonymous soulless body of textbook prescribers and of being stamped good or bad as a result of such studies. . . . I liked to be free and read what I pleased and not be examined at all."

For a very short while after graduation, Narayan worked as a teacher in a village school. The experience was a rebarbative one. Deciding once and for all that he was done with schools, he elected to live off the joint-family system for a time, and started on his first book. "On a certain day in September, selected by my grandmother for its auspiciousness, I bought an exercise book and wrote the first lines of a novel. . . . Malgudi with its little railway station swam into view, all ready made."

While waiting to find a publisher, he became a newspaper reporter, gathering Mysore city news and dispatching it daily to a Madras paper called the *Justice*. For some unknown reason, although the *Justice* was an anti-Brahmin paper and Narayan a Brahmin, no one objected to having him as a reporter. Narayan apparently enjoyed the work, for it brought him into contact with a wide variety of men and occupations. He abandoned the job when, thanks to the efforts of Graham Greene, *Swami and Friends* was brought out in England in 1935.

Narayan's life has been, on the whole, uneventful. There was his marked early lack of promise, the belated BA, the start of a vocation. But in 1933 as he accompanied his sister to Coimbatore, something dramatic did occur: he saw a girl drawing water from a street tap and at once fell in love with her. "Of course, I could not talk to her. . . . I suffered the agonies of restraint imposed by the social conditions in which I lived." But the girl's father happened to be a headmaster, as was Narayan's father and, as a friend of the family, often stopped in to chat. Narayan seized one such occasion to speak openly of his affection, an unheard-of breach of custom. There was a pause, a silence. The girl's father closed his eyes in prayer; some moments later, he said: "If God wills it." After all, the families knew one another; the caste and class requirements were right. Horoscopes would have to be consulted, however, and this proved to be a major obstacle. The astrologer engaged by the girl's father decided that the prospective groom's horoscope did not bode well for the marriage. Narayan engaged another astrologer, who argued a different, more favorable, reading, and the wedding took place.

A daughter was born. It was a brief, happy marriage, which came to an abrupt end with the death of his wife in 1939. Narayan was desolate, unable to pick up the pieces of his life, unable to write. His recovery commenced with what he believed to be psychic communication with the spirit of his wife. (He has described this episode in *The English Teacher*.) Narayan expects skepticism, is diffident in his claims—he does not argue them. Whatever one chooses to call it, the experience was personal and transforming. It was followed by the resumption of his vocation, steady work, and the gains of steady work—an ever-increasing mastery of his medium, and, on the average, a new book every two years. *The Guide* received the *Sahitya Akademi* award for literary merit in 1960, and in 1964, Prime Minister Nehru awarded him the *Padma Bhushan*, an award for distinguished service. And

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A.G. Mojtabai, whose novels include *A Stopping Place*, *The 400 Eels of Sigmund Freud*, and *Mundome*, all published by Simon & Schuster, is Briggs-Copeland Lecturer on English at Harvard.

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there have been other honors abroad.

Narayan has never remarried. Despite the ever-present joint-families, the ubiquity of kith and kin, the press and bustle of his crowds, notwithstanding the triumphant conclusion of *The English Teacher*, a note struck earlier in the novel resonates throughout the book, and, indeed, throughout all of Narayan's writing. It is a note of unassuageable loneliness.

> We come together only to go apart again. It is one continuous movement. They move away from us as we move away from them. The law of life can't be avoided. The law comes into operation the moment we detach ourselves from our mother's womb. All struggle and misery in life is due to our attempt to arrest this law or get away from it or in allowing ourselves to be hurt by it.

NARAYAN speaks Tamil at home, enough Kannada to make himself understood in the streets of Mysore where he lives, but it is in English that his novels are written. There should be nothing surprising in this: from primary school on, his education has been in English, as has been most of his reading. English, after all, is one of the 15 languages listed in the Indian constitution, and has even taken on some of the local coloration.

In *Reluctant Guru*, Narayan asks us to think of it this way:

> In the American restaurants, they call for 'Toasted English', referring to English muffins which, though being made in America, now retain English as a sort of concession to their origin. The same may be said of their language, too. . . . The resultant language is somewhat different from its British counterpart, it may be said to have gone through a process of toasting. One noticeable result of this toasting is that much of the formalism surrounding the use of English has been abandoned.

Something comparable has taken place in the Indianization of English, and, of course, something still further occurs in any original artist's appropriation of the language. As for Narayan, his prose is eminently palatable. His delivery is relaxed, his tone unemphatic. At rare moments lumps occur, which may or may not reflect idiomatic Tamil usage, or, perhaps, only impatience with high style. It is entirely possible, however, that the few but inevitable moments of clumsiness found in each book represent deliberate policy. In *The Vendor of Sweets*, Narayan tells a cautionary tale about a dancing figure of Nataraj, a statue of such convincing perfection that it began to dance "and the town itself shook as if an earthquake had rocked it, until a small finger on the figure was chopped off. We always do it; no one ever notices it, but we always create a flaw in every image; it's for safety."

Malgudi, the imaginary town wherein Narayan's dramas are played out, has grown from book to book and moved forward in time. The principal landmarks—Malgudi Station, the Albert Mission College, the Central Co-operative Land Mortgage Bank opposite the financial expert's office under the banyan tree, Kabir Lane, Lawley Extension, the Regal Hair-Cutting Salon, the Taj Hotel, the statue of Sir Frederic Lawley, Truth Printing Works (office of *The Banner*), the Sarayu River, Nal-

Up Against Apartheid

The Role and the Plight of The Press in South Africa

By RICHARD POLLAK

Pollak, co-founder and editor of *MORE* magazine, now literary editor of *The Nation*, reports on the government's censorship of the English-language press and persecution of the black press, and reveals how this may be significant in determining whether South Africa defuses its incendiary racial problems or explodes into bloody civil strife.
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Discovering Narayan

There are writers—Tolstoy and Henry James to name two—whom we hold in awe, writers—Turgenev and Chekhov—for whom we feel a personal affection, other writers whom we respect—Conrad for example—but who hold us at a long arm's length with their "courtly foreign grace." Narayan (whom I don't hesitate to name in such a context) more than any of them wakes in me a spring of gratitude, for he has offered me a second home. Without him I could never have known what it is like to be Indian. Kipling's India is the romantic playground of the Raj. I am touched nearly to tears by his best story, *Without Benefit of Clergy*, and yet the tears don't actually fall—I cannot believe in his Indian characters and even Kim leaves me skeptical. Kipling romanticizes the Indian as much as he romanticizes the administrators of empire. E. M. Forster was funny and tender about his friend the Maharajah of Dewas and severely ironic about the English in India, but India escaped him all the same. He wrote of *A Passage to India*: "I tried to show that India is an unexplainable muddle by introducing an unexplainable muddle." No one could find a second home in Kipling's India or Forster's India.

Perhaps no one can write in depth about a foreign country—he can only write about the effect of that country on his own fellow countrymen, living as exiles, or government servants, or visitors. He can only "touch in" the background of the foreign land. In Kipling and Forster the English are always posturing nobly and absurdly in the foreground; in Narayan's novels, though the Raj still existed during the first dozen years of his literary career, the English characters are peripheral. They are amiable enough (Narayan, unlike Mulk Raj Anand, is hardly touched by politics), but hopelessly unimportant like Professor Brown in *The Bachelor of Arts*. How Kipling would have detested Narayan's books, even that Indian "twang" which lends so much charm to his style.

> 'Excuse me. I made a vow never to touch alcohol in my life, before my mother,' said Chandran. This affected Kailas profoundly. He remained solemn for a moment and said: 'Then don't. Mother is a sacred object. It is a commodity whose value we don't realise as long as it is with us. One must lose it to know what a precious possession it is. If I had had my mother I should have studied in a college and become a respectable person. You wouldn't find me here. After this where do you think I'm going?' 'I don't know.'
>
> 'To the house of a prostitute.' He remained reflective for a moment and said with a sigh: 'As long as my mother lived she said every minute 'Do this don't do that'. And I remained a good son to her. The moment she died I changed. It is a rare commodity, sir. Mother is a rare commodity.'

The town of Malgudi came into my life some time in the early 1930s. I knew nothing then of the author who had recently, I learned later from his autobiography, thrown up a teaching job in a distant town and taken the bus back to his home in Mysore—back to the world of Malgudi—where without premeditation he began his first novel, *Swami and Friends*, without knowing from one day to another what was to happen to his characters next. I too was working, in a flat in Oxford, on a novel called *It's a Battlefield* which I felt already doomed to unpopularity.

"Soon after morning coffee and bath"—it is Narayan in Laxmipuram—

> I took my umbrella and started out for a walk. I needed the umbrella to protect my head from the sun. Sometimes I carried a pen and pad and sat down under the shade of a tree at the foot of Chanundi Hill and wrote. Some days I took out a cycle and rode ten miles along the Karapur Forest Road, sat on a wayside culvert, and wrote or brooded over life and

lappa's grove, Mempi hill, Market Road —offer both change and continuity.

Narayan chooses his characters mainly from the middle class: small entrepreneurs, teachers, journalists, moneylenders, printers. They form a minor segment of a society still predominantly agricultural, but a critical segment, providing a very sensitive register of change. Their struggles to come to grips with both the murmurs of ancient tradition and the seductions and confusions of the contemporary world are ground for endless comedy.

Here, for example, is Margayya in *The Financial Expert*, learning how to propitiate Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. Margayya's mind is upon automobiles and things of that ilk, and he is trying to concentrate on his instructions: how to form a paste from the grindings of a red lotus mixed with *ghee* (clarified butter).

> 'It must be ghee made of milk drawn from a smoke-colored cow!' said the priest.
>
> 'Oh!' groaned Margayya, not being able to hide his feelings any more.
>
> 'You probably think all this is bluff . . . some fantastic nonsense that I'm inventing.'
>
> 'Oh, no, I don't feel so for a moment, but only how hard . . . what a lot of—' . . . . Red lotus, grey-skinned cow, and antelope. . . . It seemed to him an impossible world.

ONE OF THE enduring preoccupations of the Western novel has been that critical passage each of us makes from innocence to experience, from illusion to reality. Narayan shares this preoccupation—with a difference. In Western novels there is usually development and change: the protagonist at the end of the novel is a somewhat different person from the protagonist at the start. For Narayan, however, there is a return, rather than a change; the progress is toward a realization of the protagonist's temporarily obscured, but never lost, true identity.

Lakshmi Holmstrom, in her very thorough and perceptive study, *The Novels of R. K. Narayan*, points to their frequently cyclical construction, and to the recurrence—if not centrality—of the theme of attachment. The pattern is something like this: we start out with a character wrapped up in a dream, in an "invisible network of speculation." (The phrase is Thoreau's, but it fits.) The man in question fastens upon some person, object, or scheme. It may be ambition, it may be love that sets him in motion; before he knows it, he is driven, obsessed, whirled about—then adrift. There is a moment of desperation, an overreaching, then failure, loss, a return—a return to the life from which he has been deflected.

Even in Narayan's first novel, *Swami and Friends*, we see this pattern of deflection and return beginning to emerge. Swami is utterly engulfed in his attachment to his classmate, Rajam—all but drowned in it. But time and circumstance intervene; Rajam's own desperate actions add to the growing distance between the boys so that, by the end of

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literature, watching some peasant ploughing his field, with a canal flowing glitteringly in the sun.

I was struggling at the same time to follow the movements of my characters through the streets of Battersea and Bloomsbury and along the reach of Euston Road. We had both been born under the sign of Libra, so if one believes in astrology, as Narayan, who once supplied me with my horoscope, certainly does, we were destined by the stars to know each other. One day an Indian friend of mine called Purna brought me a rather traveled and weary typescript—a novel written by a friend of his—and I let it lie on my desk for weeks unread until one rainy day . . . I didn't know that it had been rejected by half a dozen publishers and that Parna had been told by the author not to return it to Mysore but to weight it with a stone and drop it into the Thames. Anyway Narayan and I had been brought together (I half believe myself in the stars that ruled over an Indian and an English Libra birth). I was able to find a publisher for *Swami*, and Malgudi was born, the Mempe Forest and Nallappa's Grove, the Albert Mission School, Market Road, the River Sarayu—all that region of the imagination which seems to me now more familiar than Battersea or the Euston Road.

In the 11 novels which extend from *Swami and Friends* to *The Painter of Signs* Narayan has never, I think, strayed far from Malgudi, though a character may sometimes disappear forever into India, like Rajam, friend of the schoolboy Swami, simply by taking a train. Year by year Narayan has peopled Malgudi with characters we never forget. In his second novel—a very funny and happy book—there is Chandran, little more than a schoolboy, whom we leave at the end of *The Bachelor of Arts* in a bubble of excitement at a marriage which has been arranged with the help of a dubious, even dishonest, horoscope. In his third book, *The English Teacher*, the marriage ends in death and Narayan shows how far he has grown as a writer to encompass the sadness and loss. In *The Dark Room* the screw of unhappiness is twisted further, the killing of love more tragic than the death of love.

Narayan himself had known the death of love, and *The English Teacher* is dedicated to his dead wife. It took some years before a degree of serenity and humor returned to Malgudi with *The Financial Expert* and his "office" under a banyan tree, with Mr. Sampath, the over-optimistic film producer, the sweet vendor's son Mali and his novel writing machine, Raman, the sign painter who was lured by love of Daisy from his proper work to make propaganda in the countryside for birth control and sterilization, the bullying taxidermist, Vasu, in *The Man-Eater of Malgudi*, perhaps Narayan's best comic character.

Something had permanently changed in Narayan after *The Bachelor of Arts*, the writer's personal tragedy has been our gain. Sadness and humor in the later books go hand in hand like twins, inseparable, as they do in the stories of Chekhov. Perhaps if we had read more closely we should have seen that the shadow had been there from the beginning. A writer in some strange way knows his own future—his end is in his beginning, as it is in the pages of a horoscope, and the schoolboy Swami, watching the friend with whom he had needlessly quarreled vanish into the vast unknown spaces of India, had already experienced a little of what Krishna came to feel as he watched his beloved wife die of typhoid. One is tempted to exclaim: isn't the imaginative experience enough? Why should the author have had to suffer in himself the agony of his characters?

Graham Greene

Reprinted from *The Bachelor of Arts* by R. K. Narayan by permission of The University of Chicago Press. © Introduction Graham Greene, 1978.

the book, when we arrive at the railroad station, the train bearing Rajam away is already moving out. Swami's gift book is hurriedly tossed into Rajam's hand by another friend, Mani.

> Swaminathan and Mani stood as if glued where they were, and watched the train. The small red lamp of the last van could be seen for a long time, it diminished in size every minute, and disappeared around a bend. All the jarring, rattling, clanking, spurting, and hissing of the moving train softened in the distance into something that was half a sob and half a sigh.

The pattern emerges very clearly in *The Financial Expert*. Margayya, financial wizard to the poor, is first seen, in a fine comic juxtaposition of old and new, in his office under the banyan tree, directly opposite the imposing edifice of the Land Mortgage Co-operative Bank. Margayya's office furniture consists of an old tin box, a notebook, pen, ink, blotter. Racked by the desire for wealth, and the authority that wealth confers, Margayya bends all his efforts to propitiate Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. A priest gives him instructions for a program of ritual to be followed. Then Margayya asks about results. "Who can say?" the priest answered. "Results are not in our hands. . . . You may have results or you may not . . . or you may have results and wish that you had failed—" Margayya's 40 days of prayer are, in fact, fruitful. He becomes the publisher of a best-selling book entitled *Domestic Harmony* (originally, *Bed Life, or The Science of Marital Happiness*). From publishing to extravagant speculation schemes, he begins to consolidate his dream—a small financial empire.

But it cannot last. In his overreaching, those affairs closest to him—matters concerning his son and his business partner—fall from Margayya's grasp. The consequences of past deeds, of past inattention, mount up. Financial ruin follows, and we find Margayya chastened at the end—sober, poor, yet quite ready now to take up his life under the banyan tree. Here he is trying to pass on what he has learned to his son, Balu:

> You see that box there. I have managed to get it out again. . . . Its contents are intact as I left them years ago—a pen and an ink bottle. You asked for my property. There it is, take it: have an early meal tomorrow and go to the banyan tree in front of the Co-operative Bank. I hope the tree is still there. Go there, that is all I can say: and anything may happen thereafter. Well, what do you say? I am showing you a way. Will you follow it?

Balu's answer is true to what we know of him: "How can I go and sit there? What will people think?" And Margayya's concluding words are true to what he has come to know of himself: "Very well then, if you are not going, I am going on with it, as soon as I am able to leave this bed."

Even *The Guide*, arguably Narayan's most mature work, charts this journey of return to the self. The protagonist, Raju, has been a tourist guide, theatrical agent, lover of Rosie, the nation's

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most celebrated dancer, and most recently, through his excessive attachment to Rosie, he has become a one-time forger. Just released from jail, and without means of support, he takes refuge in a temple. He acts the part of pious sage, as seems appropriate for someone living in a temple and sponging off the faithful. He is increasingly caught up in his new role and, at the end, he dies fasting for the local peasants who need rain—a national media circus, and sanctity, forced upon him.

What Raju is doing is simply returning to what he has always been: someone who refuses to disappoint, a man supremely responsive to the expectations of others. The difference at the end—and it is a significant difference—is that, in the midst of the carnival surrounding him, Raju is answering to something more: to an expectation within the framework of a moral tradition, which ennobles him in turn.

Known primarily as a writer of comedies, Narayan has written at least two novels which do not readily fall into this category and are often forgotten. *The Dark Room* is a searching look at the position of the unliberated Indian wife—not a bit comic. *Waiting for the Mahatma*, although very funny in parts and in its off-center perspective on Gandhi and on political movements in general, has an altogether different feeling to it—perhaps because it ends with the moment of assassination. But even in his comedies, although the touch is light, the manner mirthful, Narayan seems to have profoundly serious purposes.

He may not have the worldly complexity of Khushwant Singh; he surely hasn't the political passion of Mulk Raj Anand, or the verbal suppleness and agility of Raja Rao, to cite other major Indian writers. But what Narayan does have, he makes all his own: a gift for portraying moral confusion, a fine eye for ironic contrast, for charting the intricacies of self-delusion, and, above all, a delight in character, in the sheer abundance and variety of it, and an attitude that allows differences to flower.

Most writers are partisan; doting upon this character, they withhold love from that one. Not so with Narayan, who is able to sustain that arduous balance of love and non-attachment the *Bhagavad Gita* commends to us. Narayan's capacity for letting everyone be gives his work motion and breadth: he laughs gently at hero and villain alike; the least of his minor characters bristles with vitality. In *The English Teacher*, an autobiographical novel, closely following the actual details of his marriage, even the doctor responsible for the misdiagnosis, mistreatment, and debilitation of his wife is portrayed with what I can only call affectionate irony:

> 'I thought it was malaria. . . .' the doctor said, 'I was only dreading lest it should be malaria—the most erratic and temperamental thing on earth. I wouldn't trust it. But typhoid is the king among fevers—it is an aristocrat who observes the rules of the game. I'd rather trust a cobra than a green snake; you can depend upon the cobra to go its way if you understand its habits and moods.'

Narayan's humor, here and often, is laced with sadness—not unlike, it seems to me, the mood of that unforgettable moment in Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* with Troilus passing to the other side of death, looking back, and laughing as he looks, at "this litel spot of erthe" where he's been slain.

For Narayan, there is no apotheosis—not just yet, anyway; he remains as he was, rooted to the particular spot of earth that he has so lovingly furnished and populated, devoted to the characters dashing about in the foreground. There is intense immersion in the drama at hand, a gathering momentum, then—as it were—a blink: an abrupt distance. For the reader, there is an instant of puzzlement; it feels almost as if the author had lost interest. Something happens that is tantamount to a shifting of scale; there is a sudden sense of disproportion.

"For an Indian, training in the classics begins early," Narayan says. "Our minds are trained to accept without surprise characters of godly or demoniac proportions with actions and reactions set in limitless worlds and progressing through an incalculable timescale." Modern literature has quite a different thrust. Here the attempt is "to compress the range of our observation and subject the particle to an intense scrutiny."

To "subject the particle to an intense scrutiny"—it is an arresting formulation. Viewed against a spatial and temporal background of limitless extent, the scale to which Hindu thought is accustomed, the individual in his incarnation of the moment is no more than a particle. A dreaming, scheming particle, to be sure, one which postures and swells upon scrutiny to fill all available space, but remains a particle nonetheless. And as it is with the individual, so it is with the town of Malgudi, itself—now a little spot of earth, now a teeming world.

Desire, attachment, addiction, panic, and loss—power, addiction, panic, and loss—after much frenzy, we are back where we started. We close a Narayan novel chastened by our indulgence in disproportion, protagonist and reader alike. The outcome is, nearly always, a liberation through laughter, a sense of sanity restored, of things, as we say, "in perspective."

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Reason, Shape, and Wisdom

A Coast of Trees
by A. R. Ammons

(Norton; $12.95, $4.95 paper)

A classic poem, when it appears, comes not as a surprise but as a confirmation:

> I have a life that did not become,
> that turned aside and stopped,
> astonished:
> I hold it in me like a pregnancy or
> as on my lap a child
> not to grow or grow old but dwell on
>
> it is to his grave I most
> frequently return and return
> to ask what is wrong, what was
> wrong, to see it all by
> the light of a different necessity
> but the grave will not heal
> and the child,
> stirring, must share my grave
> with me, an old man having
> gotten by on what was left

This is the beginning of A. R. Ammons's revelatory poem, "Easter Morning."

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The central sentiment is not altogether unprecedented—Robert Lowell said, "Always inside me is the child who died"—but Lowell was speaking of a younger self continuous in some way with his adult self ("Always inside me is his wish to die"). Ammons is talking about a self that stopped, that never became, that is buried in a grave that does not heal. And yet that self is not dead; it is a "child, stirring." Robert Frost talked, more distantly, of a road not taken in the past; Ammons's metaphor of the child—buried, or in a womb, or on a lap—is alive with pain and quick with dismay. Ammons's lines rivet us where we stand and we find ourselves uttering them as though our own life had suddenly found its outlet-speech: "I have a life that did not become . . . the grave will not heal." Ammons's arrow strikes straight to the heart, and to the unhealed grave in it. "How did you know," we ask Ammons, "when we didn't know, ourselves, till you told us?" This is a poetry of eerie power, dependent not so much on the particular circumstances of Ammons's life as on his unsettling skill as an allegorist. Anything he tells us about his life ("I have a life that did not become") turns out to be true of everyone: he is a poet of the universal human condition, not of particular idiosyncrasy. This great poem, "Easter Morning," turns out to be about the damage which every child undergoes as members of his family—a sibling, an aunt, a grandparent—die. It is an elegy in a family churchyard. When Ammons now goes back to North Carolina, the relatives he knew are dead:

> when I go back to my home country in these
> fresh far-away days, it's convenient to visit
> everybody, aunts and uncles, those who used to say,
> look how he's shooting up, and the
> trinket aunts who always had a little
> something in their pocketbooks. . . .

The catalog goes on to include uncles and teachers and Ammons's mother and father—all in the churchyard, dead, their world gone. And Ammons remembers himself as a child, shocked and blighted and deflected out of ordinary growth by these deaths:

> the child in me that could not become
> was not ready for others to go,
> to go on into change, blessings and
> horrors, but stands there by the road
> where the mishap occurred, crying out for
> help, come and fix this cr we
> can't get by, but the great ones who
> were to return, they could not or did
> not hear and went on in a flurry and
> now, I say in the graveyard, here
> lies the flurry, now it can't come
> back with help or helpful asides, now
> we all bury the bitter
> incompletions.

In the desolate market of experience where none come to buy (as Blake said) Ammons stands, with his uncanny plainness of speech, the lines running on like an explanation and an apology at once, heedless and pell-mell, every so often stopped by a pulling-up short, a bewilderment, an obstacle, an arrest in emotion:

> I stand on the stump
> of a child, whether myself
> or my little brother who died, and
> yell as far as I can, I cannot leave this
> place, for
> for me it is the dearest and the worst
> it is life nearest to life which is
> life lost: it is my place where
> I must stand and fail.

I am not sure whether the strange and complex resolution of the poem (in which Ammons watches the flight of eagles, and is grateful for perennial natural patterns and fresh insights alike) serves to resurrect the dead on this "picture-book, letter-perfect/ Easter morning." And I wonder whether the long anguish of the poem can be excerpted at all. But to review *A Coast of Trees* is first of all to give notice of the existence of "Easter Morning" as a new treasure in American poetry, combining the blankest of losses with the fullest of visions. It is a poem which should be published all alone, in a three-page book by itself; it is so complete it repels company.

Nevertheless, it has company, and distinguished company, in this new collection of short poems. Ammons always oscillates interestingly between the briefest of brief lyrics ("Briefings," "Uplands," etc.) and the longest of long poems ("Sphere," "Tape for the Turn of the Year"). Ammons's bedrock is his conviction of the absolute interconnectedness of all phenomena. The atmosphere (so to speak) over his bedrock is formed by his quick, almost birdlike, noticing of all epiphenomena constantly occurring in the universe—a flight of moths here, a rill of snow-melt there. The short poems record the noticings; the long poems offer the metaphysics of multiple connection. Yet even this

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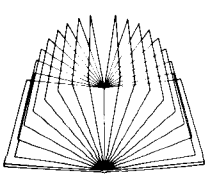

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description is too divisive. Even in the short poems, Ammons's metaphysics of multiple connection is present in an abbreviated form, represented sometimes by syntax, sometimes by rhetorical figure (notably repetition of a word or a word-root in syntactically significant positions). For instance, Ammons writes about the difficulty of putting a name, or names, to reality—and about the attendant paradox that the closer the approximation of the name to the event the more acutely one feels the frustrating gap between what has been achieved and what absolute fidelity to reality would be. Using his favorite dense repetition, he grieves, ". . . the name nearest the name / names least or names / only a verge before the void takes naming in."

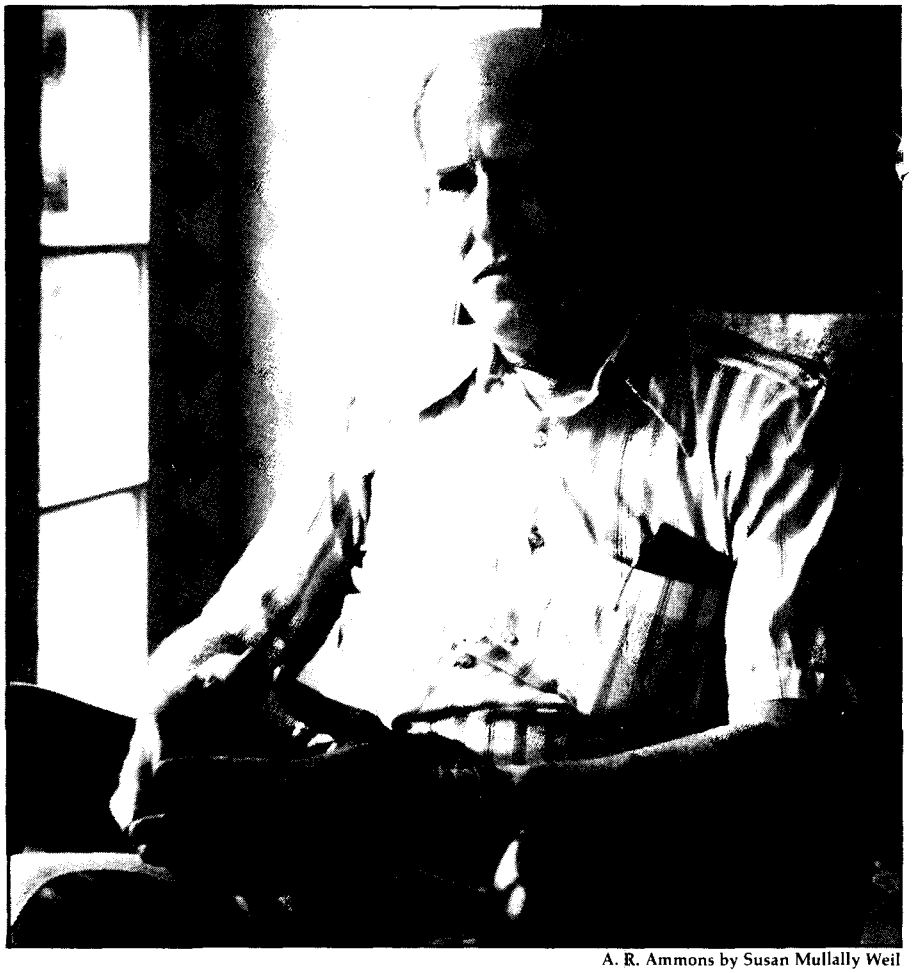
The sound of the writing verges on riddle, and hovers near theological paradox, but the sentiment is neither a riddle nor a mystification. It is a precise denomination in a series of self-joining words: "the name nearest the name names least or names only. . . ." This statement of a divergence takes on itself semantically the form of an obsessive connection. And though the creation of the formal barrier of art excludes "reality," it is surely a wonderful mutual relation that makes the terrain of the excluded ("cast out") equal exactly, as a two-piece verb, the terrain of the included ("shut in"): "when the fences foregather / the reality they shut in is cast out." Almost every statement of fear or loss in Ammons occurs in a line that paradoxically consolidates a strict, practical linguistic gain—often as simple a gain as a word humming in resonance with another word, or a triumphant conclusion to a long syntactical suspension. The suspended syntax arises from Ammons's inexhaustible wish to explain; he is the poet *par excellence* of the bifurcating line of argument, a line that is interspersed with "I suspect" or "well, maybe" or "in fact" or "after all" or "that is" or "probably" or a sequence of "but's." To that extent his poetry is the utterance of that endless rhetoric he calls "reason":

> Reason can't end:
> it is discourse, motion
> to find motion, reason to
> find reason to abandon
> reason

But against the straight "thruway" of reason Ammons sets another formal motive, which he calls "shape": shape wants to wind discourse up, to give it a rondure, a closure. The shapeliness—almost spherical—of so many of Ammons's short lyrics asserts that a moment or a mood has its own being to proclaim in a determinate form. If that form is violated, something else is produced—even another poem perhaps, but not the original one, which, in being amended, is forever gone. The shape of a poem is inviolate:

> it is as
> it is: it can't be cast
> aside except to cast
> shape aside, no part in it
> free to cast free any
> part.

The rigidity of this verse defies us to shift a single word, to misplace a single "it" or "cast." The verse rejoices in its imperviousness to tinkering: it braces its "no" against its "any," its "free" against its "cast free," its "part" against "part," creating a wind-proof, storm-proof shelter against the inversions of chance. Ammons's loquacity of "reason" so plays against his geometry of "shape" that the exhilaration of the combat of the two motives equals in interest the plangent tales he tells of the life of the spirit.



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These are twice-told tales; Ammons moves easily in the line of our poets. Like Traherne, he calls a poem "Poverty"; like Herbert, he sees a silk twist (in Ammons, "silk lines") coming down in radiance from heaven; like Keats, he stands (in the majestic poem called "Swells") on the shore of the wide world till love and fame sink to nothingness. Like Yeats, he feels the pull of the balloon of the mind (Yeats tried to tether it; Ammons says, "I have let all my balloons aloose"); like Emily Dickinson, he feels an affinity for that "neglected son of genius," the spider, working like the poet "airy with radiality"; like Oliver Wendell Holmes, he writes "An Improvisation for the Stately Dwelling"; like Williams and Hopkins, he offers perpetual praise of the world of sight. In Ammons these earlier poets have found the ideal reader—the reader who himself writes a new poem as a variation on the older one.

Ammons's own newness—it bears repeating—lies in his finely calibrated sense of the actual, non-transcendent motions of the natural world. He is not in a hurry, as most of his predecessors (Emerson, Whitman, Dickinson, Hopkins) have been, to move from natural fact to patriotic or religious or philosophical enthusiasm. Ammons is true to himself in ending "Easter Morning" with the natural fact of bird-instinct, seen in a new configuration, rather than with the transcendent resurrection of the body in spirit. The natural universe is so real to Ammons's imagination that his poem about the earth rolling in space is spoken with an ease foreign to most efforts to "imagine" a cosmic perspective. Only Wordsworth had a comparable iron sense of fact:

> We go around, distanced,
> yearly in a star's
>
> atmosphere, turning
> daily into and out of
> direct light and
>
> slanting through the
> quadrant seasons: deep
> space begins at our
>
> heels, nearly rousing
> us loose: we look up
> or out so high, sight's
>
> silk almost draws us away.

(Frost, who yearned for vision, said we can look "Neither out far nor in deep"; Ammons, in his love of sight, is silently corrective.) Ammons is tugged between

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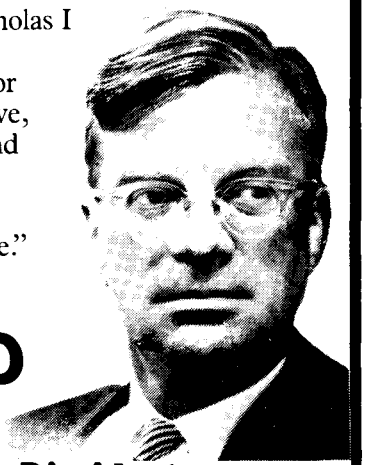

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sentiment and stoicism, and the play between those two motives is as entrancing as the play between the flow of discourse and the shape of poetry. He is as tender as Keats and as harsh as Keats, reaping some of the same benefits. He does not rise to Wordsworth's full bleakness, but he has more humor and more waywardness than Wordsworth.

"Swells" gives full range to Ammons's sentiment and stoicism alike, to his precise sense of physical motion (in this case, wave-motion), and to his firm momentum-rounding-into-shape. When hundreds of conflicting motions are assimilated into one wave, a paradoxical calm results:

> The very longest swell in the ocean, I suspect,
> carries the deepest memory, the information of actions
> summarized . . .
> so that the longest swell swells least.

Ocean floor or mountain are alike places where gigantic motions have been summarized into a near stillness:

> I like to go
> to old places where the effect dwells, summits or seas
> so hard to summon into mind, even with the natural
>
> ones hard to climb or weigh; I go there in my mind
> (which is, after all, where these things negotiably are)
> and tune in to the wave nearly beyond rise or fall in its
>
> staying and hum the constant, universal, assimilation.

To climb the summit or find that summary so hard to summon to mind, and there to hear the hum (as Stevens called it) of the universal pantomime, might be in another poet a forgetful sublimity. But Ammons, like Keats, cannot forget the world where men sit and hear each other groan; he ends his poem by saying he has sought out the summit for "rest from the ragged and rapid pulse, the immediate threat/shot up in a disintegrating spray, the many thoughts and/sights unmanageable, the deaths of so many, hungry or mad." Mortality swells so agitatingly into presence at the end of the poem that the hoped-for contemplative calm is shaken and bruised. The ills of the body and of the spirit are all there are; we die hungry or mad, our pulse ragged or rapid. In nature, of course, there is nothing "unmanageable"; the word is meaningless in the cosmos, and takes on meaning only through human will, afflicted by thoughts and sights too painful to be borne. If only, like the geologic strata or the ocean floor, we could manage "the constant, universal assimilation: the/information, so packed, nearly silenced with majesty." But we do not, and cannot, for long. The possibility, and the impossibility, of psychic assimilation are held in equilibrium in the long oceanic swell of this Stevensian poem—which should be read with Stevens's "Somnambulisma" and "Chocorua" as its predecessors.

It is a mark of Ammons's variety that it is very hard to generalize about his practice in this volume. Almost every poem has a distinctive shape and a set of new strategies, imitating the variety of nature:

> a dance sacred as the sap in
> the trees, permanent in its descriptions
> as the ripples round the brook's
> ripplestone: fresh as this particular
> flood of burn breaking across us now
> from the sun.

Ammons matches his loneliness and his freshness to the solitary, permanent, and renewed acts of nature; and in his "central attention" he keeps the universe alone. The poems enable us to watch this poet going about the business of the universe, both its "lost idyllic" and its present broken radiance. He has been about this business for years now, but I notice in reading this new collection how much more secure his language has become. Once, he was likely to err both in amassing scientific words too lavishly and in affecting too folksy a tone. Now the scientific world in Ammons is beautifully in balance with the perceptual one, and the tone is believably, and almost perfectly, colloquial. The lines are as near as we could wish to the ripples round the ripplestone.

Helen Vendler

Helen Vendler is professor of English and American literature at Boston University. Her most recent book, *Part of Nature, Part of Us: Modern American Poets* (Harvard University Press), received the National Book Critics Circle Award for criticism in 1980.

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Why Aren't the Welsh Like the Irish?

Wales: Rebirth of a Nation, 1880-1980 by Kenneth O. Morgan

(Oxford University Press; $25)

Wales and the Welsh are a puzzle to the rest of their fellow inhabitants of the British Isles. Welsh names—Jones, Williams, Evans, Morgan even—abound in England, often borne by people whose distinctive accent will be recognized for what it is. Wales is there, beyond Shropshire and Herefordshire, high, green, and beautiful. But what the country and people are like is something of which Scots, English, and Irish are almost completely ignorant. There is a Prince of Wales, but he has no permanent residence in the principality, which he seems to visit scarcely more often than the average Londoner. Wales now has a capital, but most non-Welsh would be hard put to choose correctly between Swansea and Cardiff. Welsh is a living language but impinges on British culture chiefly as an irritant to those English people living in the TWW television reception area—an unwelcome export at peak viewing times. Welcome Welsh exports are rugby (which the Welsh play consistently better than anyone else in the Triple Crown championship), spring lamb, roofing slates, and high-quality anthracite coal.

It is all very patronizing—and in the

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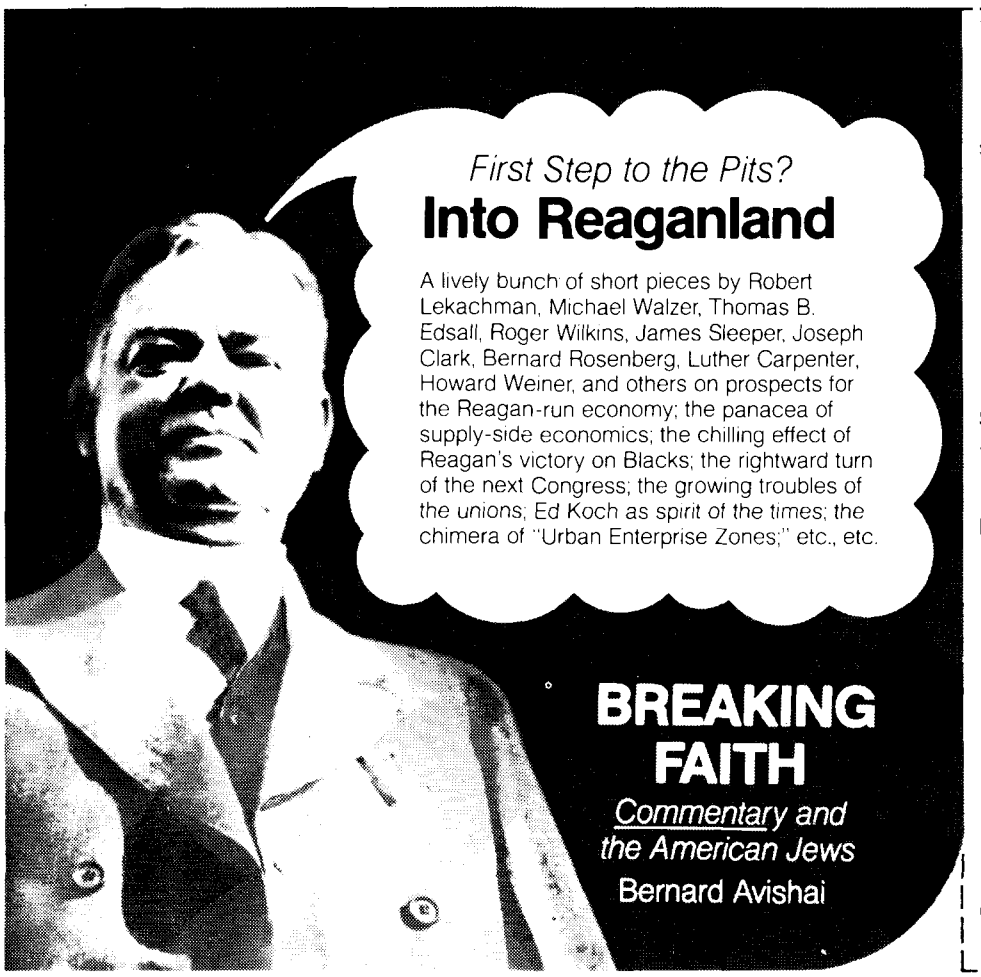
past was intensely exploitative. The Saxon invasions cut the Welsh off from their fellow Celts in Scotland and Cornwall. The Normans drove avenues of feudal conquest down the border valleys. Edward I and his successors extinguished the independence of the enclaves that lay between. The natives relapsed for 500 years into rural poverty under an increasingly Anglicized petty gentry. When, at the beginning of the 19th century, coal and iron were discovered in amplitude in the southern valleys, the mountain people were drawn thither to work for wages which slumped to starvation level as often as they boomed. After World War I, which killed Welshmen in tens of thousands, a slump set in as unbreakingly as spring drizzle on the slopes of Snowdon. And though the demands of World War II and its aftermath brought prosperity again to pits and steelworks, the new world recession has sickeningly revived old memories. The sun does not seem destined to shine on Wales.

Yet the Welsh remain Welsh and glad of it, deeply attached to their native land, bound to each other by extensive circles of friendship and cousinage. In this large and splendidly scholarly survey of their past, Dr. Morgan has set out to analyze what it is in the Welsh and their history that is the source of this sentiment. In a way, the book is explanation enough. Beautifully written —and the Welsh have silver tongues in a society of mutterers and grunters—it exudes a love of country and a deep knowledge and appreciation of all that is distinctive to it: skill and pleasure in democratic politics, nonconformist piety, cultural seriousness, a veneration of education, industrial solidarity, neighborliness, companionship. But it is very much more than an essay in filial devotion. The last volume in a series of which the others are as yet only projected, eventually to form a complete history of Wales, it sets standards of comprehensiveness, balance, and judgment that Dr. Morgan's fellow authors will have the greatest difficulty in meeting.

His theme is the rebirth of national identity, one with desolate consequences for so many other backward areas of 19th-century Europe. In Wales it did not work out that way. A great deal of Welsh wealth, though much was expatriated, remained in the principality, where it built great industrial centers and large towns which were wholly Welsh from the outset. Their citizens dominated from the start the machinery of local government established by reforming Victorian parliaments. From this local base, they went on to capture their own parliamentary representation, through the medium of the Liberal party into which the national Nonconformity was a natural bridge. Population densities and narrow choice of employment—roughly, coal or iron—nurtured a powerful trade unionism and, when Labour detached itself from the Liberals at the beginning of the 20th century, thus gave Welshmen a flying start into the leadership of both the new party and British organized labor. The meteoric rise of David Lloyd George had, of course, provided an essential demonstration that the road lay open. But it may well be that the careers of others, like Arthur Cook, James Griffiths, Aneurin Bevan, and Morgan Phillips, were more significant in establishing the self-confidence of the Welsh and securing their integration into the fullness of British political and industrial life.

Yet in the end the Welsh remain apart. And though it is a separateness


First Step to the Pits?
Into Reaganland
A lively bunch of short pieces by Robert Lekachman, Michael Walzer, Thomas B. Edsall, Roger Wilkins, James Sleeper, Joseph Clark, Bernard Rosenberg, Luther Carpenter, Howard Weiner, and others on prospects for the Reagan-run economy; the panacea of supply-side economics; the chilling effect of Reagan's victory on Blacks; the rightward turn of the next Congress; the growing troubles of the unions; Ed Koch as spirit of the times; the chimera of "Urban Enterprise Zones;" etc., etc.
BREAKING FAITH
Commentary and the American Jews
Bernard Avishai

The Spring/1981 issue of **Dissent** brings a déjà vu look into the Reagan administration by some well-known demand-side observers. **Also** some lively reviews and articles: *Naming Names*, by Murray Hausknecht; *Equal Opportunity and "The Race of Life"*, by Isaac Kramnick; *From Holocaust to "Holocaust"*, by Claude Lanzmann; *The Corruptions of Science*, by Gerald Cavanaugh; *The Ambiguous Legacy of Eduard Bernstein*, by Henry Pachter.

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that Dr. Morgan applauds and enjoys as a native son, it is also a state which as a historian he feels compelled to measure and explain. He measures it against the separateness of other "submerged nations," the French of Canada, the Basques, the Ruthenes, the Bretons, the Flemings. He explains its comfortable coexistence with Englishness by a variety of means: separatism killed by kindness and self-help would be a fair summary. And yet his explanation is not altogether convincing, if only because he seems to duck the one comparison which it would be really revealing to make—that with the Irish. It is not that he does not raise it, for he does. But he does not make it stand up and answer for itself point for point. And when similarities are checked off one against the other, the Irish and Welsh cases do look alike enough for their totally different outcomes to stand as one of the most mystifying of all the Celtic puzzles.

Both countries in the mid-19th century were almost entirely agricultural, and poor peasant agricultural at that. Both were different by religion from England: from 1885 there was insistent and powerful demand to disestablish the Anglican church in Wales as it had been disestablished in Ireland in 1869. Both were from mid-century onward in the process of rediscovering their past —a highly bogus past but all the more powerful for that. Both were dominated by land-owning gentries which claimed to be indigenous but were wholly Anglicized. Both underwent a massive rural depopulation. Both were possessed by nothing short of political fever once the later franchise acts had disseminated the vote. Both had a lively national literary culture, enriched in Wales by the use of a language which did not have to be re-invented. Both abounded in articulate and dynamic national spokesmen. Both had a long list of genuine national grievances from which those leaders could draw in urging their peoples forward to emergence. But when it came to forms of emergence, the Irish insisted on secession and the Welsh never looked like wanting anything but integration.

As one raised on the pure milk of Irish nationalism (as opposed to Republicanism), as Dr. Morgan was raised on that of Welsh, I think I can see why the Irish felt as they did. Catholicism was more different from Anglicanism than Nonconformity was. The famine was worse than the depopulation of rural Wales through industrialization. The English had been nastier more recently to the Irish than they had to the Welsh. Legal disabilities on the Welsh had disappeared far earlier than they had on the Irish. But I cannot see why the Welsh did not follow them at least part of the way. A Marxist, looking at the crowded industrial landscape of South Wales, would reckon it a perfect seed bed of revolution, far more so than the sleepy townships and uncommercial cities of Ireland. Told of the strength of union organization, the general level of education, the Welsh passion for politics, he would have no hesitation in predicting that it would be in the Rhondda rather than in Cork that a national liberation movement would take root and flourish.

What explains why it didn't and apparently won't? (In the referendum of 1979 only 11 percent voted for devolution.) Is it all to do with proximity, an open border, and the comfortable absorption of surplus Welsh intellectuals into the English teaching profession, which they have dominated for 50 years almost as ostentatiously as the Irish have dominated bartending? Or did the rise of Lloyd George defuse a Welsh time bomb? Or did the collapse of the General Strike of 1926 break the Welsh will to fight? (It was largely a Welsh battle.) Or is the quietism of Welsh Nonconformity at the root of it all? These are questions to which the Irish ought to want the answers because if they are honest, they will recognize that the Welsh have been far more successful than they at handling the English.

John Keegan

John Keegan teaches at the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst, and is the author of *The Face of Battle* (Viking Press).

Correction:
There was a misprint in Barry Goldensohn's poem, "The String Quartet," (*TNR*, April 11). The first line of the last stanza should have read, "The violist sits and plays," not "The violinist sits and plays."

Two Cheers for Zoroaster

Creation
by Gore Vidal

(Random House; $15.95)

Few American writers can display the virtuosity of Gore Vidal: saline essays on popular arts and letters; our best political play, *The Best Man*; intimate analyses of politics, ranging from his observations chez Kennedy to the limitations of Ronald Reagan; futuristic visits to a small planet; revisionist appraisals of America's past imperfect in *Burr* and *1876*; and, of course, the sexual vaudeville of *Myra Breckenridge*, *Myron*, and, though he has shrewdly disowned it, the film *Caligula*, loosely based on his conceptions.

And yet . . . and yet. I know of no writer with comparable gifts who elicits so little critical response. Interviews in the *Times*, television appearances, magazine cover stories, pieces in the *New York Review of Books*, and still, somehow, he remains outside the main current of American thought. He still does not seem to have interested Kazin or Trilling; Edmund Wilson's letters mention him but once—as a critic, not a novelist; and he makes only a cameo appearance in the new Bartlett's, which has room for Kris Kristofferson, but only a footnote for Vidal (as the adulator of Edith Wharton; he has no entry of his own). This exclusion is due mostly to the writer himself. Vidal has spent decades creating the persona of the Gentleman Bitch of American letters: cutting but not piercing, acidulous but not serious. The way Addison DeWitt was in *All About Eve*.

A pity. In fact, Gore Vidal is a serious man and an almost solemn writer. No one who was not soberly concerned with values, morality, and history could have attempted *Creation*. The book dodges sensationalism and studiously avoids sex—a wedding night is dismissed in a paragraph and even the eunuchs are seen in long shots—and

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concentrates on an epoch remote to all but scholars and undergraduates.

His arena is the fifth century BC, one of the richest periods of human and social development. Herodotus, the father of history, was building the armature for his creation; Pericles was polishing his oratory; Aeschylus flourished; so did Socrates, Aristotle, Pythagoras, Confucius, Zoroaster, and Lao Tzu. Cartography and coinage began; Persia flourished; China—referred to as Cathay—and India were complex and vigorous cultures. The possibilities are endless and so, nearly, is the novel that utilizes them.

Vidal's protagonist is Cyrus Spitima, grandson of Zoroaster, now an old blind man annoyed with Herodotus's version of the Persian wars. He counters by dictating a series of memoirs to his grandson Democritus. They begin with anachronistic twaddle—"by the way, the acoustics of the Odeon are dreadful"—but after he clears his throat, Spitima becomes, like most ancients, far clearer about what happened decades ago than about what was served at yesterday's breakfast.

In Persia he is rescued from an accident by the young Xerxes, later to become his nation's King of Kings. Later Spitima visits Babylon; the Sardis created by Croesus; the India of castes and traditions, where he takes a bride. He meets the Buddha, who fails to sway him: "The absence of purpose, finally, makes [his] truths too strange for me to accept." When Xerxes assumes the throne, Spitima is made ambassador to Cathay. There, naturally, he meets Confucius. At times the sage verges dangerously close to the later oracle and sub-gumshoe Charles Chan: "When I asked him what the latest tortoise-shell auguries had foretold, he said, 'the shell asked to be reunited with the tortoise.' 'Is that a proverb, Master?' 'No, honored guest, a joke.' "

But the portrait of Cathay and its rhythms is layered, credible, and wise. Vidal's observation of forgotten Chinese culture is unimprovable: "It was the genius of the Chou dynasty to mitigate man's destructive nature through intricate rituals, observances, manners and music. Even . . . silences, cryptic utterances, uses or nonuses of the facial muscles were all a part of the nobleman's code."

Nevertheless, Spitima remains unconverted. The old-time religion is good enough for him, and Zoroastrianism, with its majestic battle of the good God Ohrmazd versus the Evil One, its belief in the pure element of fire, keeps his faith burning until the finale. Yet by that dying fall both Spitima and his Zoroastrianism are not quite the same. Though the dualism of his faith made sense throughout the long search, he cannot quite see the Western meaning of existence expressed simply as a line proceeding from birth to . . . what? He cannot say. But he knows that the Eastern notion of life as a circle, unending, infinitely renewed, is also unacceptable. Perhaps, then, life is movement, change, the ceaseless whirl of first things into vast structures and then on to new forms. Flux. This is Spitima's legacy to his nephew; it became part of the first atomic theory. Nothing remains; nothing dies; as we know and Spitima does not, 23 centuries later other religions will be celebrated by William Blake:

> The Atoms of Democritus
> And Newton's particles of light
> Are sands upon the Red Sea shore
> Where Israel's tents do shine so bright.

And the creeds, too, will be subsumed in the epochs to follow. . . .

For a man who describes himself as spent, Vidal writes with extraordinary concentration and little of the predictable reversals that mar much of his work. To be sure, Athens, the cradle of democracy in everybody else's book, is seen as a repository of tedium and decay; the Buddha has "a scent of sandalwood about him that struck me as less than ascetic"; and Socrates is only a stonemason: "I hired him to repair the front wall of the house." But Vidal, for once, is aiming at something higher than nose-tweaking. After all, unlike the foundering fathers of *Burr* or the Centennial scam of *1876*, the cast of *Creation* has little call on our emotions. Ringing in a celebrity like Henry James had some value, like finding an old gossip column in a yellowing edition of *Harper's Weekly*. But a walk-on by Thucydides is hardly likely to make readers breathe any faster. No, this time Vidal has a purpose as lofty as the one in Thomas Mann's *Joseph* novels, no longer read and, in truth, not very much missed. But they had a worthy aim, expressed in one of the volumes: "Deep is the wall of the past. Shall we not say it is bottomless?" In the remotest eras, Mann and Vidal suggest, the ancients had their own sense of history and prehistory, their own bewilderment about rival beliefs and impending catastrophe and the sense of God immanent

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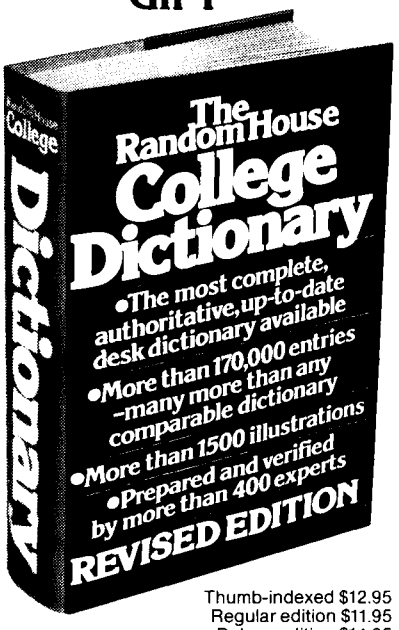
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in things and forever out of reach.

Can it be, then, that Vidal the apostate, the man who once labeled Christianity "the greatest single disaster that has ever happened to the West," who likes to describe himself as having the face of one of the "later, briefer Roman emperors," who thinks our elections are "an expensive public charade," who fancies that America is a sinking ship on which nothing but a deck chair is worthwhile, has written a work of grace and hope? It can. In the process his secular synoptic gospels have shown an annihilated world as no schoolbooks can do and no educational channel can attempt.

Its central and grave flaw is typically Vidalian: if you wonder with Tolstoy how the poor die, or with Robert Coles, how they live, *Creation* offers not a clue. It does not, for that matter, tell how the middle class lived in the fifth century BC. The book's style is panoramic and its populace notable—the sort whose names even then would have been worth an item in the evening papyrus.

Still, *Creation* is well worth the years of research and effort, and it rewards the hours of close attention it requires. In recent years there has been no historical novel remotely like it; nor has there been one which so effectively demolishes the author's carefully nurtured image of smiling mortician to the 20th century. When Gore Vidal graduated from Phillips Andover in 1944 he was named Class Hypocrite. Out of the mouths of preppies.

Stefan Kanfer

Stefan Kanfer is a senior editor at *Time* magazine and author of *The Eighth Sin* (Random House).

The Culture Gulf

Debacle: The American Failure in Iran
by Michael Ledeen and William Lewis

(Knopf; $14.95)

The fall of the shah ranks with the communist takeovers of China and South Vietnam as one of the greatest setbacks to American foreign policy since World War II. When the Ayatollah Khomeini came to power in February 1979, the United States lost a supplier of energy, a major customer, a friend in the Persian Gulf, and a strategic ally against the Soviet Union. In the wake of this setback—and we are still ignorant of its full consequences—the actions of the Carter administration have become the focus of sharp debate.

The lines of argument are already clear. Those who support Carter argue that the shah fell of his own weight; the US had neither the means nor the right to save him. Steven Cohen, former deputy assistant secretary of state for human rights, wrote in *The New Republic* on March 28 that the shah was the victim of "profound social and political revolutions that were decades in the making." Stresses that had been building up came to a head in 1978: economic mismanagement, political repression, social discontent, and cultural schizophrenia combined with such force that no outside power could have thwarted the Iranians from their revolutionary course. Further, those who favor the Carter administration argue that it acted honorably; even if the US lost from the changes in Iran, not attempting to undermine the revolution restored the "former reputation of the United States as a supporter of freedom, . . . replacing its more recent image as a patron of tyranny."

Carter opponents stress the American role in the shah's collapse. They see the events of 1978 as fluid; the rise of the Ayatollah Khomeini was neither inevitable nor clearly preferred by most Iranians. In their view, the US's abdication of its proper role in Iran led to a disastrous loss of power in that country and to a diminishment of its credibility internationally. While Carter apologists emphasize the irresistible movement of events within Iran, the opponents lay stress on foreign influences—not just of the US, but also of the Soviet Union and the PLO.

Michael Ledeen and William Lewis have chosen a title which leaves no doubt where they stand in this controversy. The United States, they argue, had such a powerful role to play in Iran that even its attempt *not* to act had huge repercussions. President Carter wanted to stay clear of involvement. As he put it in a press conference on December 7, 1978, barely a month before the shah left Iran permanently:

> We have never had any intention and don't have any intention of trying to intercede in the internal political affairs of Iran. We primarily want an absence of violence and bloodshed, and stability. We personally prefer that the shah maintain a major role in the government, but that's a decision for the Iranian people to make.

According to Ledeen and Lewis, all this was "a self-deception." The United States had to play a role, "for the Iranian people, like those in every small country dependent on the policies of the superpowers, were particularly sensitive to anything that looked like a change in policy on the part of the American government." There was no opting out; in itself, taking no action had enormous impact on both the shah and his opponents, convincing them all that President Carter had abandoned the shah (as it turns out, an utterly wrong conclusion). Stress on human rights and on differences between the US and Iranian governments further confirmed for Iranians that Washington had forsaken the shah.

The authors single out Carter's human rights policy for attack, arguing that most of all it confused the Iranians (and other allies). They believe that Carter's officials who were intent on introducing moralism into American foreign affairs probably "had not thought through the international consequences of the presidential rhetoric. . . . [E]ither the administration was serious, in which case some form of 'linkage' would have to be adopted" or else its words could be dismissed as mere bombast. For linkage to work,

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human rights issues could be pressed only against countries over which the United States exerted influence—our allies. What pressure short of military intervention could we exercise on the most vicious violators of human rights in Cambodia, Vietnam, or Uganda?

As a result, "the full force of the human rights advocates came to bear on authoritarian regimes that were considered reactionary, and that were tied more or less closely to the United States." Relations with such countries as South Korea, Nicaragua, and Iran worsened, confusing their leaders.

> It appeared to many nations that the United States was abandoning its traditional policy of containment of Soviet expansion in favor of a new sort of moral isolationism. . . . [T]he impression from the outside was of an administration that was withdrawing from world affairs, that imposed arbitrary standards on its allies and would-be allies, and that was capable of sudden dramatic turnabouts in its relations abroad. Above all, many foreign leaders were baffled by the apparent abandonment of traditional concepts of national self-interest.

If leaders were baffled, opposition movements were emboldened; American politics inspired the shah's enemies to act by the end of 1977. They had shaken the regime within a few months, yet Washington paid no attention. One reason for this was the dismal performance of American intelligence services. Ledeen and Lewis report that by June 1978 the Israelis had concluded that the shah was doomed and the French predicted in the spring of 1978 that the shah would be gone within the year, but the Americans ignored these reports and continued to believe in the shah's strength. A Defense Intelligence Agency intelligence appraisal of September 28, 1978, declared that "the shah is expected to remain actively in power over the next 10 years." (He fled Iran on January 16, 1979.) Unbelievably, Washington did not know about Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's terminal cancer; nor did it understand his character (he was counted on to be far more ruthless than was the case) or that of Khomeini (who was counted on to be manipulable by the politicians). In all, "the U.S. government was always at least one step behind the realities of the Iranian revolution."

Conflicting policies within Washington exacerbated the difficulty of dealing coherently with Iran. Leaks to the press, special counselors, and last-minute envoys, Brzezinski-Vance conflicts, human rights zealots, and a basic reluctance to appreciate "the potentially catastrophic dimensions of the Iranian crisis" all contributed to the mess. For example, during January 1979, the US had two ranking representatives in Tehran, the ambassador and a presidential emissary. "In one of the more bizarre scenes in recent American diplomatic history, the two men would dine together and discuss the day's developments. After dinner and brandy first one, then the other would call Washington with almost diametrically different assessments." Even more than these obstacles to coherent policy, "the basic problem throughout the crisis was that the President was notable for his absence," uninterested in the problem and unwilling to set down the outlines of US policy to guide his aides.

In keeping with their interest in the role of outside forces, Ledeen and Lewis also note the Soviet and Palestinian connections. A Persian language radio station had been operating clandestinely just inside the Soviet border with Iran for 20 years; in contrast to the official Soviet policy of mild support for the shah, the "National Voice of Iran" viciously attacked him. "On some occasions the correspondence between the words of the National Voice and the actions in the streets of Iran was impressive." For example, the first seizure of the US embassy in Tehran took place on February 14, 1979, within hours after the station announced that the police files of SAVAK had been transferred to it.

The Palestine Liberation Organization had an even more central role. For while Khomeini's "triumph rested in the last analysis on the support of the Iranian people," it also depended on an organization. Here the PLO had a vital role in structuring the shah's opposition, training it, providing it with arms and international contacts. The forces which brought Khomeini to power had always been anarchic in the past but he was able to order them "because he was able to enlist non-Iranian forces in his struggle."

Many tantalizing, undocumented points crop up in *Debacle*. I was not aware that every Israeli prime minister has visited Tehran. Ledeen and Lewis report that the shah subsidized deposed monarchs; that Khomeini used assassination against other ayatollahs to further his bid to become Iran's supreme religious leader; that Yasser Arafat

Harry Levin

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appeared at the funeral of Ali Shari'ati, a radical Iranian thinker about Islam and society. I did not know that the shah asked French president Giscard D'Estaing not to sign an order expelling Khomeini from France in mid-November 1978, or that the shah refused to give Iranian military leaders permission to stage a military coup after his departure from the country.

With clarity and logic, Ledeen and Lewis demonstrate two points: the vital importance of America's role during the Iranian revolution and Washington's disarray in coping with this issue. Their argument is forceful, yet I finished *Debacle* with an uneasy feeling. Its authors show a greater understanding of American interests than the combined wisdom of the Carter administration; I salute their political skills. But their book betrays the same cultural attitudes that have repeatedly undermined US interests in Iran and elsewhere.

Despite four decades as a leading international power, America still lacks rapport with alien customs and mentalities. US foreign policy specialists often show a distressing lack of interest or understanding in the rest of the world. For example, they viewed Iran as a characterless cipher: a less developed country, an oil exporter, an arms market, a strategic ally—not as a nation whose history, religion, and social mores make it unique. The specialists concentrated on foreign policy matters to the exclusion of foreign expertise.

Uninterested in Iran but fascinated by the process of policy formulation in Washington, Ledeen and Lewis fuel the wrong debate. We gain little from a battle over "who lost Iran"; rather, what we need is serious inquiry into the causes of the Iranian uprising—the feud between Abbas Hoveyda and Jamshid Amouzegar (and not that between Brzezinski and Vance), the generals' attitude toward the shah, the danger of mutiny in the army ranks, the sources of Khomeini's support, and the struggle between the factions that brought Khomeini to power.

Even more, we need to recognize the American inability to shed our own cultural context and pay attention to the ways of other peoples. Iranians are not just poorer than Americans; they differ from us in a myriad of important ways. Something can be salvaged from the American failure in Iran if it spurs the foreign policy establishment to take other cultures more seriously.

Daniel Pipes

Daniel Pipes, associated with the University of Chicago, is the author of *Slave Soldiers and Islam*, just published by Yale University Press.

The Mutability of the Heart

What We Talk About When We Talk About Love
by Raymond Carver

(Knopf; $9.95)

Nothing to Do with Love
by Joyce Reiser Kornblatt

(Viking; $11.95)

" 'I'll see if anybody's home,' " says the nameless boy in "Why don't You Dance?," the first short story of Raymond Carver's masterful collection. The boy and his girlfriend, who are furnishing their first apartment, have happened upon an odd yard-sale in which the contents of the house have been reassembled on the lawn exactly as they stood inside. An extension cord even allows the blender, television, and lamps to keep on whizzing and glowing in the twilight. " 'Whatever they ask, offer ten dollars less,' " the girl advises. " '. . . they must be desperate or something.' " She is wrong only in using the plural pronoun. All the occupants of Carver's houses are desperately alone, whether or not they are living with each other.

Apparently the enigmatic man who lives in this house has been left by someone, and he sells the furnishings of his broken life at prices that the youngsters find absurdly low. In their eagerness to begin living together they never guess that, were the man a stranger driving past his own sale, he would not stop. His-and-her nightstands, reading lamps, double bed: everything must go.

In what becomes a strange little party in these rooms that have no walls to contain the light, the man ends up dancing with the tipsy girl. (Carver's characters tend to drink a lot.) She draws him close. " 'I hope you like your bed,' " he tells her.

Later, the girl keeps retelling the story of the yard sale and the haunting sympathy she felt for the stranger who virtually bequeathed her his youth. She is trying somehow to express a meaning greater than the actions, but what she helplessly dwells on is the good bargain she got. So much stuff so cheap. Words fail her.

As the title of the book implies, the difficulty of talking about what really matters is a subject that haunts Raymond Carver. A story called "A Serious Talk" describes the Christmas quarrels of a separated couple who manage to say a great deal in the language of infidelity and violent gestures without ever settling down to the discussion they keep planning. They do exchange one word that means something, however. After they have battled so furiously that it seems little of value can be left unsmashed, the husband selects a particular ashtray to throw, and his wife stops him merely by asserting that it is *theirs*. Not hers alone, whatever its legal status, but theirs: the plural pronoun rivets each of them. Still, it fails to fuse them together as the husband had hoped. Words retain some power, but not enough to hold our relationships together under the juggernaut of modernity.

Carver is a poet as well as a writer of short stories (his previous collection was nominated for a National Book Award), and the new stories have the fierce compression and evocativeness of fine poems. Their language suggests, however, that the author finds little in contemporary life to wax lyrical about: the pruned-down sentences and paragraphs have the authority of deliberate understatement, even withholding, like a black-and-white photograph of a fire. The first impact of all the stories is sharp and visceral. Only afterward, as the skeleton of each one keeps rattling in the mind, does the painstaking intel-

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ligence of their designer become apparent.

The title story depicts two articulate couples discussing love, and it suggests many of the problems of both love and conversation. Mel loves his present wife, Terri, but they have different ideal images of what love should be. Terri likes to describe her first husband's violence as a measure of the passion she once inspired. Mel, irritated by her nostalgia, defines love as far more gentle and chivalrous, although it soon becomes apparent that he daydreams about killing his first wife. These people trying to fit words to their experience have lived most of their lives in other places, with other people, and the pall of impermanence starts to hover closely over them as the daylight drains from the room. They would like marriage to last but find little in their pasts to give them faith. Should they take heart, Mel asks, from the fact that the process of loving goes on even as the names keep changing? Is process, rather than individuality, our "saving grace"? But Mel immediately counters his own question with the touching story of an old couple who stayed romantically in love throughout their lives. He longs for feelings that endure.

For the most part, however, Carver writes about ordinary people, bingo-players and motel-managers, rather than the highly introspective "we" that the title seems to promise. He implies that underneath their words, intellectuals lead the same mysterious lives of everydayness shot with desire and dread that the rest of the species is doomed to, so it scarcely matters whether he records the flailings of a psychiatrist or his patient. A father tries to talk, but not listen, to his son; an old man, scared for his sick wife, resents youth; a husband goes berserk with boredom and, in a parody of the mating ritual that first entrapped him, murders a girl; another wife wonders if her husband is capable of murder. Young parents love each other and their baby, but grow apart anyway. "Things change," the father later tells his questioning daughter. "I don't know how they do. But they do without your realizing it or wanting them to."

It is the fore-tremors and aftershocks of the changes that Carver records so well: the violence that underlies monotony; the passion that erupts and sunders people who still care about each other and then vanishes as cruelly as it came. Often his calm portraits of ravaged people read like the best of James M. Cain's novels when the murder is finished and the lust is dying and only senselessness endures.

Empty homes and empty language; barter as a substitute for sharing and photographs as a substitute for living; the unknowability of ourselves and those we love; impermanence: these are Joyce Reiser Kornblatt's subjects, too, in her first, engrossing collection of fiction. The kinship between the two writers goes much deeper than the coincidence of love in the titles of their books.

The narrator of Kornblatt's last story, "Relics," for example, has already had a yard sale in which she sold the furnishings of her early life to strangers who whispered, " 'Divorce. Desperate. Bid low.' " By now, in fact, she has become an "archeologist" of such sales herself, studying them for weekend entertainment. For all her experience, however, she is puzzled when a newspaper ad ("Everything Must Go") leads her back to her old neighborhood, to a prosperous-looking home with no signs of packing or price tags where a man sits reading. It soon becomes apparent that what this man is trying to sell is nothing less than his life. Like Gatsby wooing Daisy, he throws open his closets and strews rainbows of clothing across his bed to impress his visitor. He craves a wife, not only for company, but, even more crucial, for meaning. When he tries to sell his old photograph albums he explains that in telling the woman about every picture he might be able to piece together a story about his life he can believe in. Like the girl in Carver's very similar story about a strange yard sale, he is struggling to speak about what really matters, but like her, he ends up describing commodities instead. Once again, language fails its ancient task of binding together solitary people. The life story this man aches to sell is one the woman can no longer buy. With some regret but even more relief, she returns to her car and drives back into "the confusing rush of modern traffic."

The main difference between Carver and Kornblatt lies not in subject matter but in style. Whereas he is almost surrealistic in his laconic recitals of odd events, she, like her narrator in "Relics," is something of an archeologist in her fondness for cataloguing and explaining. One of her characters describes psychological insight as the discovery of patterns, "like finding a new constellation of stars in what I thought had been an empty place in the sky," and Kornblatt does not deny her readers the pleasures of such finds. In fact, the human passion for meaning and order interests her more than any other. Most of her characters are female "refugees from love" who retreat into an intellectual detachment that brings security but ultimately leaves them emotionally cut off. Indeed, finding a stable point between estrangement and emotional engulfment is probably an especially hard problem for women, traditionally the caretakers of relationships, at a time when the forms of love are in constant flux; and Kornblatt writes astutely and affectingly about it. If once or twice her stories grow a little too schematic, like insights too far removed from the conflicts that generated them, this is understandable in a writer who is fascinated by precisely this escape route

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from pain. Carver rarely conspires with his characters in their attempts to impose meaning on experience. Kornblatt often does.

A runaway daughter and her cool-minded, geneticist mother take turns narrating Kornblatt's moving title novella. "Think of despair as the dissolution of gravity," says the abandoned mother. "Nothing adheres. All attachments fail." This form of despair is what propels the newly divorced woman in "Red Camaro" into a merry-go-round of visits to old friends and lovers that only leave her feeling all the more uprooted, manic. Very skillfully, Kornblatt shows that flitting from one place and emotion to another forces our interpretations of our lives to flit as well, until we grow helpless to make any lasting sense of anything we feel.

Common sense, or meaning, is the glue that binds communities, a social product, and outside of community it is hard to so much as identify, like a splotch of glue with nothing on either side. To whatever extent mortals have ever enjoyed meaning and permanence they have probably gained it by subordinating their individuality, their fluctuating passions and priorities, to rules. Yet in modern times, as Carver and Kornblatt make vividly apparent, the old rules no longer bind us. Our quirks are free to shape our lives.

Meredith Marsh

Meredith Marsh's latest novel is *Eating Cake* (Coward, McCann, Geoghegan).

Correspondence, *from page 3*

ture of matters Divine and human. It is therefore most wise soberly to render unto faith the things that belong to faith" (*Novum Organum*, Book 1).

Victoria Drake
Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts

To the editors:

Niles Eldredge is wrong when he asserts in his article, "Creationism Isn't Science," that "there is nothing in this notion [creationism] that allows us to go to nature to test it, to verify or reject it." One way in which creationism may be tested is to examine the fossil record. A creationist would predict that there would be an absence of transitional forms in the fossil record. This is exactly what one finds. The imaginative drawings in historical geology texts purporting to show, for instance, the evolutionary rise from eohippus to horse are merely wishful fantasy. In short, there are no "missing links." Darwin was aware of this deficiency in the fossil record in his day, but could only hope that further rooting around in the strata would rectify the situation. Over 100 years of intense searching has failed to produce the evidence.

This matter of fossils is the heart and core of the matter. After all, the fossil record is the only means whereby the various theories of evolution could be proved, since, as most evolutionists would agree, you can't observe evolution going on today. Eldredge says, "The grand prediction of evolution is that there should be one basic scheme of similarities interlocking all of life." That's like predicting that a circle should be round. As Eldredge points out, creationism can also easily predict this ordered diversity of life.

It really does come down to a matter of belief. Did chance and natural processes create life, or did a Creator create life? From the evidence at hand, neither is verifiable, and a case can be built for each. Both require quantum leaps of faith, but at least creationism gives you something to believe in. Evolution leaves you groping in the fossil record for evidence which apparently does not exist. Until evolutionists can surmount this nemesis, they must not be offended if they are not taken seriously by people of common sense.

Peter M. Leschak
Side Lake, Minnesota

The editors welcome correspondence from TNR*'s readers. Letters intended for publication should include the correspondent's full name, address, and telephone number, should be typed double-spaced, and held to under 200 words. Longer letters may be abridged due to lack of space.*

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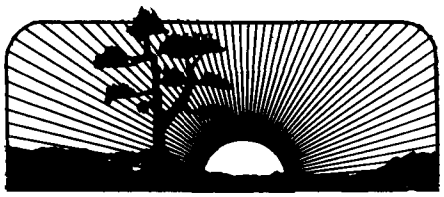

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Fun Factories

The sun belt in general, and Disneyland in particular, seemed a logical place for a demobilized veteran of the Carter batallion to reprogram his brain before jumping back into the age of Reagan. So off I went. Disneyland first opened in 1955, the year some of the new Republican members of Congress were born. Its designers consciously saw it as an ideogram of America. They even mimicked the geography, putting Frontierland in the west, the Everglades in the south, and Main Street right in the middle. It's a grandiose conception. Can anyone imagine such a place being built today? Not that the newer fun factories don't have fancy hardware. What they lack is the big D's inclusive, confident sense of one vast vanilla-flavored American melting pot. The newer places are more into cultural pluralism. They park their themes in narrower spaces. Those that sprang up in the 1970s—Opryland, Busch Gardens, Brabhupada's Palace (the Hare Krishna complex in the West Virginia hills), Six Flags Over Texas—tend to reflect the special-interest preoccupations and ethnic chauvinism of that decade. Only Florida's Disney World is true to the broader vision of the California prototype: throw in everything, as long as it's nice. The Disneyland idea is pre-Oswald, pre-Vietnam, pre-Watts, pre-the works.

It was my first visit since 1965. The years have changed even Disneyland, but the place has lost none of its metaphorical aptness. Main Street is the first attraction as you enter. Mickey Mouse Clubbers will recall that it's a scaled-down idealization of a turn-of-the-century small town. Fifteen years ago I had the impression that Main Street was getting frayed around the edges. The crowds hurried through it to get to the Matterhorn. Not this time. Like the old values it represents, Main Street has staged a comeback. Its paint glistens fresher and brighter than ever. Its shops may be only five-eighths the size of the ones on Rodeo Drive, but they're twice as full. I moved on to Fantasyland, where there is something called "It's a Small World." Its message is international understanding, but it can't be doing much for the cause. One sits in a boat that is pulled through a series of rooms. Each room contains massed ranks of bouncing child robots, wearing different national costumes but identical round have-a-nice-day smile faces. The robots' jaws move in time to a deafening, endlessly repeated ditty with the refrain, "It's a small world after all!" Less than halfway through the ride, my companion turned to me and said, "This is what hell must be like."

Tomorrowland was the only bit I had really wanted to see as a kid, because it was supposed to show what the future would be like. But this is 1981 and if Tomorrowland is any guide, the future has seen better days. Like the pollsters' measurements of public faith in things to come, it has gone into a steep decline. It has the air of a public housing project the mayor hasn't moved into yet. The monorails and miniature highway cloverleafs look forlorn and unconvincing. Tomorrowland has become Disneyland's slum district. Malaiseland would be a better name for it. (I still think Jimmy Carter was right about that one.) An arcade full of electronic video games has been opened, and no amount of wondrous Japanese technology can prevent one of those places from having a sleazy look. Most of Tomorrowland's development funds evidently have been put into "Space Mountain," a state-of-the-art indoor roller coaster. It's an excellent ride, but if it's meant to predict the future, we can all expect to spend a lot of time waiting in line in aluminum tubes, then experiencing a sudden, jolting plummet into darkness. But rest assured. If Kemp-Roth works, Tomorrowland will look like Main Street.

Disneyland's grown-up cousin, Las Vegas, lies four hours to the west, on the other side of an empty desert. It is a wonderful, astounding place, and safely American. No foreigner will ever build a better one of *those*. The lights along the Strip and and on Fremont Street—well, Las Vegas beggars the imagination, among other things. In Las Vegas inflation has been confined to two sectors of the economy: gambling and fire insurance. You can still get a big steak with all the trimmings at the Golden Nugget for not too much more than you paid for this magazine, but now it takes two dollars a hand to sit down at a blackjack table that cost a quarter 15 years ago. The drinks are still free.

It's another four-hour drive to Lake Havasu City, Arizona, also a cousin of Disneyland by virtue of its possession of one of the most surreal tourist attractions in the world: London Bridge. If Christo had done this, he could have retired to general applause. But it wasn't Christo, it was one Robert P. McCullogh, late owner of the McCullogh Oil Corporation, a petroleum exploration and production company. In 1968 McCullogh bought, or rather had his company buy, London Bridge. He paid $2,460,000 for it, cash, and petroleum exploration and production be damned. It's rumored that he thought he was buying the Tower Bridge, which more closely resembles the one in the nursery rhyme. The lady from the Lake Havasu City Chamber of Commerce vehemently denies this. She says McCullogh knew perfectly well what bridge he was buying, and maybe she's right. Maybe the old boy knew that even this ordinary-looking 1825 English stone bridge wouldn't look so ordinary by the time it got to Arizona. In any event, London Bridge was taken apart stone by eight-ton stone, loaded in a ship bound for Los Angeles, trucked to what was then literally nowhere, and rebuilt. To give the bridge something to span, McCullogh borrowed some water from the Colorado River and built Lake Havasu. To give the bridge a town to be near, he built Lake Havasu City. And to rake in the tourist bucks, he built a little theme park in the bridge's shadow called the English Village. The English Village has a British Pub, two Gift Shoppes, a Candle Shoppe, a Rock Shoppe, and a Gallerie of Glasse. It also has a green lawn, but you can stand on it, peer through the arches of London Bridge, and see cactus plants growing in the sand 50 yards away and desolate mountains beyond. According to the locals, the original investment has been recouped, and London Bridge is in the black. Say what you will about inappropriate uses of oil profits, the McCullogh Oil Corporation deserves some sort of credit for pulling this off.

Back in Los Angeles, a friend took me for my first drink at the Polo Lounge of the Beverly Hills Hotel. We waited patiently for a star to appear, and finally one did. But the new right-wing *zeitgeist* is relentless. Hoping for Warren Beatty, we got Pat Boone. It's a small world after all.

H.H.

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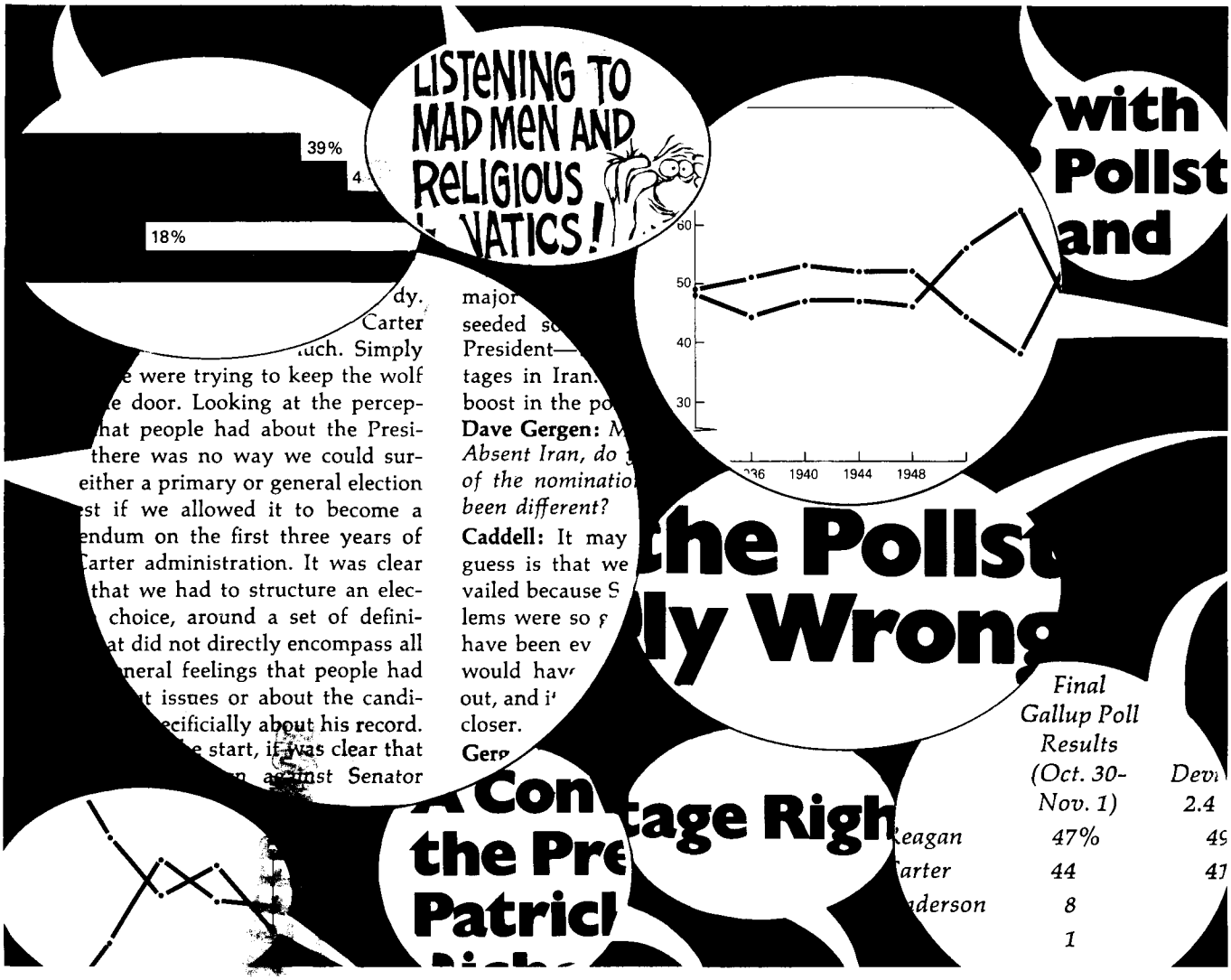

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